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# Shall India Live Or Die?

BY

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PUBLISHED BY

THE NATIONAL HOME RULE LEAGUE

NEW INDIA BOOKSHOP

1925

Price Re 1-8 Cloth

Re. 1-6 Boards

## Foreword

This little book is intended to prove the inefficiency of British Rule in India in matters on which the Life of the Nation depends. The facts and figures are taken from sources which cannot be challenged, and they reveal the tragedy which has reduced to poverty the Nation of which the wealth attracted the European merchants, who, after their sordid fights with each other to obtain the largest share of the plunder, were driven into various corners of the coveted territory, where they still remain, a negligible number, while their rivals from Great Britain established their power, and from traders blossomed into rulers. The exhausting nature of their rule is well shewn by the brutally cynical advice of Lord Salisbury to apply the lancet to parts not already bled white. The patient is now so depleted by the loss of blood, that the very life is in danger. What is to be the answer to the question. Shall India live or die? If she wins Home Rule, she will live. If the present system of Government continues she will die. The answer is for India to give. Let India speak.

ANNIE BESANT

# Shall India Live or Die?

## INTRODUCTION

### Alternatives

The title of this little book shows how serious I consider the condition of India to be, how pressing the necessity of change in the policy which Great Britain is pursuing towards her "Great Dependency". That policy, if continued for some time to come, must place before India the choice between definite alternatives, one of which is dangerous, the other fatal. These are Independence, after a terrible struggle, issuing finally if, and when, successful, in the temporary despotism of a Dictator and years of unsettled political conditions—as the French Revolution ended in Napoleon I, his overthrow, and fifty years of violent changes, concluding with the war with Germany and the establishment of a Republic, which gradually has grown strong, and is now firmly settled as the form of Government suited to the French Nation. It might end in a similar way in India, but I doubt it, for the struggle would be likely to spread, with the consequences detailed below. The choice of this alternative would mean that the tie between India and Great Britain was broken, to the great injury of both countries, and that their Joint Mission to the world was destroyed.

The injury to India would be that she would be laid open to foreign invasion, exhausted by the struggle with Britain, the North would very likely be rent away from the South, and would pass into close alliance with

Afghanistan and the other Muslim Kingdoms to the West and South-West, or be subject to forays and invasions, the South would slowly organise itself, and possibly be dominated by an alliance between the great Princes, whose Kingdoms and populations are predominantly Hindu. Hindus and Muslims, when the foreign Power left them to themselves, would probably draw together, and would ultimately unite again after many *years of separation, being really of kin to each other*, and being driven to join hands by the necessity of self-defence against the violence of the North-Western less civilised countries.

The injury to Great Britain would be that, in losing India, she could not maintain her position as a first-rate Power, except at the price of conscription, and the concentration of her energies on self-defence rather than on civil liberty and peaceful progress. Parting with India in anger, with embittered feeling on both sides, the chances of an alliance between the two countries would be small, and their trade with each other for many years would be diminished if not destroyed.

And what of their Joint Mission to the world? What of the drawing together of the colored and white races? What of friendship between Asia and Europe? Would it not be likely that, in the revolt and the combat by which alone Independence could be won, other Nations, colored and white, would join in, and the whole world would be convulsed with the titanic struggle? Of such a war, who can foretell the end?

Moreover, the Joint Mission to the World would disappear in their separation. The Union between East and West, with the peaceful exchange of complementary

qualities evolved by the two civilisations in separation, with the proper proportion of the maintenance of Rights and the performance of Duties accurately adjusted, with the spirituality of India permeating and purifying the practicality of Britain, and the common sense of Britain softening the acerbity of religious differences and the superstitions of ignorance in India—all this would prove to be a dream. The two civilisations would probably perish in a common ruin and another period of darkness, while the younger Nations slowly built up a civilisation, would again be repeated.

It is World-Issues such as these which have to be faced to-day. Not in carelessness and heedless haste, not with light hearts and crude ideas, not in defiance of all Righteousness and abandonment to worldly passions must this great question of Union or Independence be forced to a premature answer. With gravity and utmost thought, with love for both great Nations in our hearts, with scrupulous regard for Truth and Righteousness, with trust in God, and intentness on the welfare of the world, must this controversy be carried on, and just judgment be formed.

It is because I believe that the tie between India and Britain has been woven by Indian Rishis and Devas in co-operation with British Saints and Guardian Angels, and that its rending by perversity, folly and ignorance would mean, on either and on both sides, a set-back to human evolution, that I publish this booklet, in the hope of avoiding a catastrophe, while yet there is time for parley.

I do not deny India's Right to Independence, if she determines to achieve it, every Nation is acknowledged

to possess such a Right. There can exist no Right in a foreign Nation to rule another. The ridiculous claim to "Trusteeship," to camouflage the black treachery and intrigue by which men like Clive and Hastings dishonored the name of Britain, and imposed on India a system of looting and oppression which India had never before experienced, a system which drained her of her wealth in ways practised by no previous raiders—that specious pretence has worn too thin to hide the naked truth.

But while India has a Right to claim Independence, it is germane to the subject to ask. Has she power to win it? Britain has deprived her of that power first by depriving her of the right to carry arms, and then by closing against her admission to the Air Force, and by denying to her officers' training for the Artillery—the two great striking arms of a modern army. Without these a battle would only be a massacre of men who would never come within striking distance of their foe. Towns would be reduced to ruins, any gathering of men would be scattered and their bodies strewn in fragments over their fields.

In talking of Independence, it is cogent to ask. Is it practicable, when one party is armed to the teeth and the other is disarmed?

The other alternative is the Death of India as a Nation, after a period of swift and agonising decay. Independence is dangerous and probably would be fatal to both Nations, but a continuance of India's slow decay under British Rule means death, inevitable death. She is being stunted in her natural stature, emasculated by her submission to inferiority of status in her own land, and its inevitable corollary of helotry abroad, she is

losing her vitality, has a feeble hold on life and a short life period, because of generations of semi-starvation, the shocking death-rate among babies in cities, because the ill-fed mothers toil in factories till a few days before and a few days after their birth into the world—their world being often inner rooms in houses into which neither light nor fresh air can penetrate.

It is, I hope, clear from the above that I am entirely opposed to, and should steadily resist, any proposed breaking of the tie between India and England. One of my objects in writing is to strengthen the tie, which is now strained to a degree perilous to its continuance, and I see no way of doing this, except by stating, with the utmost precision and clarity, why India will revolt or die, unless Britain quickly consents to the establishment of Dominion Home Rule, Dominion Status, in India placing her on a complete equality with the other Free Nations in the Federation which has H. I. M. George V as its Sovereign. Throughout when I say Swarāj, or Home Rule, I mean Dominion Status, and I use the terms as synonyms. By British Rule I mean the Administration of India by British officials instead of by Indians, the treating of India as a "Dependency," instead of as a Self-Governing Dominion, such as Canada or Australia.

I think that, on the whole, a crowned Commonwealth works better than a Republic with a President at its Head. The President of the United States has more power than a constitutional Monarch, and a citizen of the United States has less liberty than a citizen of Britain. The Law gives him less to begin with, and powerful private organisations circumscribe that allowed by the



Law, and kidnap or murder citizens of whom they disapprove. There is no private and irresponsible tyranny in Britain, which, for its own white citizens, still remains the freest country in the world. Now and then there are temporary aberrations, as in the case of "Conscientious Objectors" during the War, but these quickly disappear.

### ***Is British Rule Efficient ?***

I charge against British Rule—and shall prove it by its own statistics—that it is grossly inefficient in the matters which concern the daily lives of the people. I know that when a famine occurs and people are dying outright of starvation, there are many Civilians who work night and day to save them, wear themselves out in vain efforts to rescue, but these people are half starved all the time, and soon go over the brink of starvation on which they normally exist. But before they go over there is shameful delay in recognising famine conditions, cruelly hard tests imposed on weakened bodies. Even the fragments of power given to the Legislature by the Reforms of 1919 have shown how much more efficient, in vital matters, are Indians than Britons, and have opened the eyes of many. The British are efficient in organisation of posts, telegraphs, secretarial works, reports and accounts, though they overpay themselves and underpay their Indian staffs, their administration is a whited sepulchre, fair outside but within full of dead men's bones, of starved bodies and stunted brains. The signs of that decay are in the facts around us, summarised in the published statistics of the Government, and in other facts capable of verification, historical, financial, social. Shall the splendid opportunity given to Britain of,

leading the World in the first Federation of Free Nations, colored and white, eastern and western, knit in brotherly love and equal friendship, be cast away into the dust-bin of Time? Shall the signing by Elizabeth of England of the Charter to English merchants trading in India, on the threshold of 1601, prove to be the passing bell of India's millennial life, and be allowed to change into the knell, announcing her death?

This question is not a new one, though few have put it clearly and definitely. So far as I know, Gopal Krishna Gokhale—acclaimed as a Moderate politician—was the first to put it squarely and bluntly. Englishmen claim efficiency for their rule, and its efficiency is declared to be its justification. Gokhale challenged that claim as being untrue, and he proved his statement by facts, after his usual deadly fashion, the fashion which made him so formidable as an antagonist. It was his position that I took up in 1917, in my Presidential Speech to the Indian National Congress of that year. I then said:

The present rule, while efficient in less important matters and in those which concern British interests, is inefficient in greater matters on which the healthy life and happiness of the people depend. Looking at outer things, such as external order, posts and telegraphs—except where political agitators are concerned—main roads, railways, etc., foreign visitors, who expected to find a semi-savage country, hold up their hands in admiration. But if they saw the life of the people, the masses of struggling clerks trying to educate their children on Rs 25 (28 s 0¼ d) a month, the masses of laborers with one meal a day, and the huts in which they live, they would find cause for thought. And if

the educated men talked freely with them they would be surprised at their bitterness Gopal Krishna Gokhale put the whole matter very plainly in 1911

One of the fundamental conditions of the peculiar position of the British Government in this country is that it should be a continuously progressive Government. I think *all thinking men, to whatever community they belong* will accept that Now I suggest four tests to judge whether the Government is progressive and further whether it is continuously progressive The first test that I would apply is what measures it adopts for the moral and material improvement of the masses of the people and under these measures I do not include those appliances of modern Governments which the British Government has applied in this country because they were appliances necessary for its very existence though they have benefited the people such as the construction of Railways the introduction of Post and Telegraphs and things of that kind By measures for the moral and material improvement of the people I mean what the Government does for education what the Government does for sanitation what the Government does for agricultural development and so forth. That is my first test The second test that I would apply is what steps the Government takes to give us a larger share in the administration of our local affairs in Municipalities and Local Boards My third test is what voice the Government gives us in its Councils—in those deliberative assemblies where policies are considered And lastly we must consider how far Indians are admitted into the ranks of the public service

With the second, third, and fourth tests I am not here specially concerned only with the first and that summarily but I shall deal more fully with the Education question in Chapter I, for the inefficiency of the Bureaucracy is terribly evident in the ignorance of the masses compared with their condition under Indian rulers. \*

Those were Gokhale's tests and Indians can supply the results of their knowledge and experience to answer them But before dealing with the failure to meet these

tests, it is necessary to state here that it is not a question of blaming men, or of substituting Indians for Englishmen, but of changing the system itself. It is a commonplace that the best men become corrupted by the possession of irresponsible power. As Bernard Houghton says "The possession of unchecked power corrupts some of the finer qualities." Officials quite honestly come to believe that those who try to change the system are undermining the security of the State. They identify the State with themselves, so that criticism of them is seen as treason to the State. The phenomenon is well known in history, and it is only repeating itself in India. The same writer—I prefer to use his words rather than my own, for he expresses exactly my own views, and will not be considered to be prejudiced as I am thought to be—cogently remarks —

He (the official) has become an expert in reports and returns and matters of routine through many years of practice. They are the very woof and the warp of his brain. He has no ideas only reflexes. He views with acrid disfavor untried conceptions. From being constantly preoccupied with the manipulation of the machine he regards its smooth working, the ordered and harmonious regulation of glittering pieces of machinery, as the highest service he can render to the country of his adoption. He determines that his particular cog wheel at least shall be bright, smooth, silent and with absolutely no back lash. Not unnaturally in course of time he comes to envisage the world through the strait embrasure of an office window. When perforce he must report on new proposals he will place in the forefront, not their influence on the life and progress of the people, but their convenience to the official hierarchy and the manner in which they affect its authority. Like the monks of old, or the squire in the typical English village, he cherishes a benevolent interest in the commonalty, and is quite willing, even eager, to take a general interest in their welfare, if only they do not display initiative or assert themselves in opposition to himself or his order. There is much in this

proviso Having come to regard his own judgment as almost divine, and the hierarchy of which he has the honor to form a part as a sacrosanct institution, he tolerates the laity so long as they labor quietly and peaceably at their vocations and do not presume to intermeddle in high matters of State This is the heinous offence And frank criticism of official acts touches a lower depth still even *lèse majesté* For no official will endure criticism from his subordinates, and the public, who lie in outer darkness the pale do not in his estimation rank even with his subordinates How, then, should he listen with patience when in their cavilling way they insinuate that in spite of the labors of a high souled bureaucracy all is perhaps not for the best in the best of all possible worlds—still less when they suggest reforms that had never occurred even to him or to his order, and may clash with his most cherished ideals? It is for the officials to govern the country, they alone have been initiated into the sacred mysteries they alone have stand the secret working of the machine At the utmost the laity may tender respectful and humble suggestions for their consideration but no more As for those who dare to think and act for themselves their ignorant folly is only equalled by their arrogance It is as though a handful of schoolboys were to dictate to their masters alterations in the traditional time table or to insist on a modified curriculum These worthy people (official) confuse manly independence with disloyalty they cannot conceive of natives except either as rebels or as timid sheep

Of these tests, then I take only the first Let us now apply it and ask—I quote again from my speech

‘What has the Bureaucracy done for “education, sanitation, agricultural improvement, and so forth”? I must put the facts very briefly, but they are indisputable

*Education* The percentage to the whole population of children receiving education is 28, the percentage having risen by 09 since Mr Gokhalé moved his Education Bill six years ago [1911] But even this percentage is illusory It is recognised by educationists that children taught for less than four years lose what they had learned during that time In *The Educational Statistics*

(British India) for 1914-15, we find that 6,333,668 boys and 1,128,363 girls were under instruction, 7,462,031 children in all. Of these, 5,434,576 had not passed the Lower Primary Stage, and of these again 1,680,561 could not even read. If these be deducted from the total, we have only 2,027,455 children receiving education useful to them, giving us the appalling figure of 83 per cent. The money spent on the 5½ millions might as well be thrown into the Bay of Bengal. The percentage of children of school-going age attending school was 20·4 at the end of 1915. In 1913 the Government of India put the number of pupils at 4½ millions, this has been accomplished in 59 years, reckoning from Sir Charles Wood's Educational Despatch in 1854, which led to the formation of the Education Department. In 1870 an Education Act was passed in Great Britain, the condition of Education in England then much resembling our present position. Grants-in-aid in England had been given since 1833, chiefly to Church Schools. Between 1870, and 1881 free and compulsory education was established, and in 12 years the attendance rose from 43·3 to nearly 100 per cent. There are now 6,000,000 children in the schools of England and Wales out of a population of 40 millions. Japan, before 1872, had a proportion of 28 per cent of children of school-going age in school, nearly 8 over our present proportion, in 24 years the percentage was raised to 92, and in 28 years education was free and compulsory. In Baroda, education is free and largely compulsory, and the percentage of boys is 100 per cent. Travancore has 81·1 per cent of boys and 33·2 of girls. Mysore has 45·8 of boys and 9·7 of girls. Baroda spends annas 6-6 per head on school-going children, British India annas three. Expenditure on

Education advanced between 1882 and 1907 by 57 lakhs Land Revenue had increased by 8 crores, military expenditure by 13 crores, civil by 8 crores, and capital outlay on railways was 15 crores (I am quoting G K Gokhale's figures) He ironically calculated that, if the population did not increase, every boy would be in school 115 years hence, and every girl in 665 years Brother Delegates, we hope to do it more quickly under Home Rule I submit that in *Education the Bureaucracy is inefficient*

*Sanitation and Medical Relief* The prevalence of plague, cholera, and, above all, malaria, shew the lack of sanitation alike in town and country This lack is one of the causes contributing to the low average life period in India—23·5 years In England, the life period is 40 years, in New Zealand 60 The chief difficulty in the way of treatment of disease is the encouragement of the foreign system of medicine, especially in rural parts, and the withholding of grants from the indigenous Government Hospitals, Government Dispensaries, Government Doctors, must all be of the foreign system Ayurveda and Unani medicines, Hospitals, Dispensaries, Physicians, are unrecognised, and to “cover” the latter is “infamous” conduct Travancore gives grants-in-aid to 72 Vaidyashālas, at which 143,505 patients—22,000 more than in allopathic institutions—were treated in 1914-15 (the Report issued in 1917) Our Government cannot grapple with the medical needs of the people, yet will not allow the people's money to be spent on the systems they prefer Under Home Rule, the indigenous and the foreign system will be treated with impartiality I grant that the allopathic doctors do their utmost to supply the need and show great self-sacri-

fice, but the need is too vast and their numbers too few. Efficiency on their own lines in this matter is therefore impossible for our bureaucratic Government, their fault lies in excluding the indigenous systems, which they have not condescended to examine before rejecting them. The result is that *in sanitation and medical relief the Bureaucracy is inefficient*

*Agricultural Development* The census of 1911 gives the agricultural population at 218.3 millions. Its frightful poverty is a matter of common knowledge, its ever-increasing load of indebtedness has been dwelt on for at least the last thirty odd years by Sir Dinshah Wacha. Yet the increasing debt is accompanied with increasing taxation, land revenue having risen, as just stated, in 25 years, by 8 crores—80,000,000—of rupees. In addition to this there are local cesses, salt tax, etc. The salt tax, which presses most hardly on the very poor, was raised in the last budget by Rs. 9 millions. The inevitable result of this poverty is mal-nutrition, resulting in low vitality, lack of resistance to disease, short life period, huge infantile mortality. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, no mischievous agitator, repeated in 1905 the figures often quoted

Forty millions of people, according to one great Anglo-Indian authority—Sir William Hunter—pass through life with only one meal a day. According to another authority—Sir Charles Elliot—70 millions of people in India do not know what it is to have their hunger fully satisfied even once in the whole course of the year. The poverty of the people of India, thus considered by itself, is truly appalling. And if this is the state of things after a hundred years of your rule, you cannot claim that your principal aim in India has been the promotion of the interests of the Indian people.

It is sometimes said "Why harp on these figures? We know them." Our answer is that the fact is ever



harping in the stomachs of the people, and while it continues, we cannot cease to draw attention to it. And Gokhale urged that "even this deplorable condition has been further deteriorating steadily". We have no figures on mal-nutrition among the peasantry, but in Madras City, among an equally poor urban population, we found that 78 per cent of our children were reported, after a medical inspection, to be suffering from mal-nutrition. And the spareness of the frame, the thinness of arms and legs, the pitifully weak grip on life, speak without words to the seeing eye. It needs an extraordinary lack of imagination not to suffer while these things are going on.

The peasants' grievances are many and have been voiced year after year by this Congress. The Forest Laws, made by legislators inappreciative of village difficulties, press hardly on them, and only in a small number of places have Forest Panchayats been established. In the few cases in which the experiment has been made, the results have been good, in some cases marvellously good. The paucity of grazing grounds for their cattle, the lack of green manure to feed their impoverished lands, the absence of fencing round forests, so that the cattle, straying when feeding, are impounded and have to be redeemed, the fines and other punishments imposed for offences ill understood, the want of wood for fuel, for tools, for repairs, the uncertain distribution of the available water, all these troubles are discussed in villages and in local Conferences. The Arms Act oppresses them, by leaving them defenceless against wild beasts and wild men. The union of Judicial and Executive functions makes justice often inaccessible, and always costly both in money and in time. The village officials

naturally care more to please the Tahsildar and the Collector than the villagers, to whom they are in no way responsible. And factions flourish, because there is always a third party to whom to resort, who may be flattered if his rank be high, bribed if it be low, whose favor can be gained in either case by cringing and subservience and tale-bearing. *As regards the condition of agriculture in India and the poverty of the agricultural population, the Bureaucracy is inefficient*

The application of Mr Gokhale's first test to Indian handicrafts, to the strengthening of weak industries and the creation of new, to the care of waterways for traffic and of the coast transport shipping, the protection of indigo and other indigenous dyes against their German synthetic rivals, etc., would show similar answers. We are suffering now from the supineness of the Bureaucracy as regards the development of the resources of the country, from its careless indifference to the usurping by the Germans of some of those resources, and even now they are pursuing a similar policy of *laissez faire* towards Japanese enterprise, which, leaning on its own Government, is taking the place of Germany in shouldering Indians out of their own natural heritage.

In all prosperous countries crafts are found side by side with agriculture, and they lend each other mutual support. The extreme poverty of Ireland, and the loss of more than half its population by emigration, were the direct results of the destruction of its wool industry by Great Britain, and the consequent throwing of the population entirely on the land for subsistence. A similar phenomenon has resulted here from a similar cause, but on a far more widespread scale. And here, a novel and

portentous change for India, "a considerable landless class is developing, which involves economic danger," as *The Imperial Gazetteer* remarks, comparing the census returns of 1891 and 1901. "The ordinary agricultural laborers are employed on the land only during the busy seasons of the year, and in slack times a few are attracted to large trade centres for temporary work." One recalls the influx into England of Irish laborers at harvest time. Professor Radhakamal Mukerji has laid stress on the older conditions of village life, he says

The village is still almost self-sufficing, and is in itself an economic unit. The village agriculturalist grows all the food necessary for the inhabitants of the village. The smith makes the ploughshares for the cultivator, and the few iron utensils required for the household. He supplies these to the people but does not get money in return. He is recompensed by mutual services from his fellow villagers. The potter supplies him with pots, the weaver with cloth, and the oil man with oil. From the cultivator each of these artisans receives his traditional share of grain. Thus almost all the economic transactions are carried on without the use of money. To the villagers money is only a store of value, not a medium of exchange. When they happen to be rich in money they hoard it either in coins, or make ornaments made of gold and silver.

These conditions are changing in consequence of the pressure of poverty driving the villagers to the city, where they learn to substitute the competition of the town for the mutual helpfulness of the village. The difference of feeling, the change from trustfulness to suspicion, may be seen by visiting villages which are in the vicinity of a town, and comparing these villagers with those who inhabit villages in purely rural areas. This economic and moral deterioration can only be checked by the re-establishment of a healthy and interesting village life, and this depends upon the re-establishment of the Panchâyat as

the unit of Government, a question which I deal with presently. Village industries would then revive and an intercommunicating network would be formed by Co-operative Societies. Mr C P Ramaswami Aiyar (now the Hon Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyar, KCIE, Vice-President of the Executive Council of the Government of Madras) says in his pamphlet, *Co operative Societies and Panchâyats*

The one method by which this evil (emigration to towns) can be arrested and the economic and social standards of life of the rural people elevated is by the inauguration of healthy Panchâyats in conjunction with the foundation of Co-operative institutions, which will have the effect of resuscitating village industries, and of creating organised social forces. The Indian village, when rightly reconstructed, would be an excellent foundation for well developed co operative industrial organisation

Again

The resuscitation of the village system has other bearings not usually considered in connection with the general subject of the inauguration of the Panchâyat System. One of the most important of these is the regeneration of the small industries of the land. Both in Europe and in India the decline of small industries has gone on *pari passu* with the decline of farming on a small scale. In countries like France agriculture has largely supported village industries, and small cultivators in that country have turned their attention to industry as a supplementary source of livelihood. The decline of village life in India is not only a political, but also an economic and industrial problem. Whereas in Europe the cultural impulse has travelled from the city to the village, in India the reverse has been the case. The centre of social life in this country is the village, and not the town. Ours was essentially the cottage industry, and our artisans still work in their own huts, more or less out of touch with the commercial world. Throughout the world the tendency has been of late to lay considerable emphasis on distributing an industrial co-operation, based on a system of village industries and enterprise. Herein would be found the origins of the arts and crafts guilds and the garden cities, the idea underlying all these being to inaugurate a reign of Socialism and

Co operation eradicating the entirely unequal distribution of wealth amongst producers and consumers India has always been a country of small tenantry and has thereby escaped many of the evils the Western Nations have experienced owing to the concentration of wealth in a few hands The communistic sense in our midst and the fundamental tenets of our family life have checked such concentration of capital This has been the cause for the non development of factory industries on a large scale

Addressing an English audience G K Gokhale summed up the general state of India as follows

Your average annual income has been estimated at about £ 42 per head Ours according to official estimates is about £ 2 per head and according to non official estimates only a little more than £ 1 per head The total deposits in your Postal Savings Bank amount to 148 million sterling and you have in addition in the Trustees Savings Bank about 52 million sterling Our Postal Savings Bank deposits with a population seven times as large as yours are only about 7 million sterling and even of this a little over one tenth is held by Europeans Your total paid up capital of joint stock companies is about 1900 million sterling Ours is not quite 26 million sterling and the greater part of this again is European Four-fifths of our people are dependent upon agriculture and agriculture has been for some time steadily deteriorating Indian agriculturists are too poor and are moreover too heavily indebted to be able to apply any capital to land and the result is that over the greater part of India agriculture is as Sir James Caird pointed out more than twenty-five years ago only a process of exhaustion of the soil The yield per acre is steadily diminishing being now only about 8 to 9 bushels an acre against 30 bushels here in England

*In all the matters then which come under Gokhale's first test the Bureaucracy has been and is utterly inefficient*

#### **Reaction of Autocracy**

In putting before the Indian and British public the details of some parts of British administration in India I hope to show the British public that it is necessary for the safety and the good name of Britain that she should

co operate with India in the establishment of Swarāj. If she will thus co-operate, then her name will become the more glorious in the eyes of the world, for she will be living up to the traditions which once made that little Island the admiration of all Nations, bond and free. But for many years now she has been proving the truth of the sad prophecy of Richard Cobden, that the result of Autocracy in India would react upon Britain herself, to the loss of her own love of Liberty. Mr. Hobson wrote .

As our free Self Governing Colonies have furnished hope, encouragement, and leading to the popular aspirations in Great Britain, not merely by practical success in the art of Self Government, but by the wafting of a spirit of Freedom and Equality so our despotically ruled Dependencies have ever served to damage the character of our people by feeding the habits of snobbish subservience the admiration of wealth and rank, the corrupt survivals of the inequalities of feudalism. Cobden, writing in 1860 of our Indian Empire, put this pithy question 'Is it not just possible that we may become corrupted at home by the reaction of arbitrary political maxims in the East upon our domestic politics, just as Greece and Rome were demoralised by their contact with Asia?' Not merely is the reaction possible it is inevitable. As the despotic portion of our Empire has grown in area a larger number of men, trained in the temper and methods of autocracy as soldiers and civil officials in our Crown Colonies, Protectorates and Indian Empire, reinforced by numbers of merchants, planters, engineers, and overseers, whose lives have been those of a superior caste living an artificial life removed from all the healthy restraints of ordinary European society, have returned to this country, bringing back the characters sentiments and ideas imposed by this foreign environment.

Neither side profits by the policy, as I wrote in 1917 -

It is a little hard on the ICS that they should be foreigners here, and then, when they return to their native land, find that they have become foreigners there by the corrupting influences with which they are surrounded here. We import them as raw material to our own disadvantage, and when we export them as manufactured here, Great Britain and India alike suffer from their reactionary

tendencies The results are unsatisfactory to both sides

Are we not seeing the melancholy results in Britain of this very reaction? Let anyone remember the storms of public anger, when it became known that Mazzini's letters were being opened and used to betray his friends abroad, when Governor Eyre in Jamaica was accused of having acted over-harshly in dealing with troubles there, and then contrast with these generous outbursts of indignation against the condoning of oppression, the £10,000 purse given to General Dyer as a reward for "saving the Empire" by the massacre of Amritsar, his "crawling order" and his share in the terrible excesses of Martial Law in the Panjab, with Sir Michael O'Dwyer's splenetic outburst in the Viceroy's Legislative Council against the educated Indians, and his policy in the Panjab during the War, to say nothing of the policy towards India that he is now pressing in Britain, which, if adopted, would mean outbreaks of violence here, with the conduct of his suit against Sir C. Sankaran Nair in London, that has put an end among Indians to any hope of justice in an English Court where an Indian advocate of liberty is a party. It used to be held that a superior authority was responsible for the conduct of his subordinates—*qui facit per alium facit per se*—but while the methods of the recruitment in the Panjab were known all over India, and were borne witness to at the trial to some extent, it was held that they were unknown to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, and that to blame him for them was libellous. It is enough to read such papers as *The Morning Post* and *The Daily Telegraph* to show how British love of Liberty has changed to condonation of tyranny, even to admira-

tion of it as "firmness" Throughout India has spread an utter distrust of British equity and of her hatred of oppression 315 millions of people cannot be governed by a handful of Britons, unless they consent to the continuance of their rule, but the masses, once indifferent, are now sullenly resentful, and the educated Hindus, once admirers of British Liberty and believers in her goodwill to their country, are now estranged, and are either openly hostile, or else quietly working for Swarâj The troubles in the Panjab are the results of 1919, and the estrangement of the Sikhs, once the strongest support of the British Râj, is shown by the Gurudwara movement and the Akali campaigns The British Services are justifiably uneasy, but they err seriously in trusting their future to threats of machine-guns and aeroplanes, instead of to facilitating that which they know to be inevitable—the coming of Swaraj The one sided Report of the Lee Commission, imposing more than a crore of additional expenditure on a Service upon which India more and more looks as inimical to her welfare, and its quick acceptance by the new Government in 1924, while they stubbornly deny—if their supporters are to be trusted—any improvement of the Reform Act before 1929, will exasperate Indians still further The practically unanimous protest against the Ordinance, despite the pledges of the Viceroy and the Governor of Bengal that it will only be used against violence and conspiracy, shows how the gulf is widening between the Government and the class of Indians from which are drawn the Legislatures, without which they can no longer govern India

Most earnestly do I appeal to all British officials and



to the British public, both in India and in Britain, to grasp the opportunity of establishing Swarāj here, while it can be established peacefully and with mutual goodwill, before that opportunity melts into the Past

### **A Nation as an Individual**

One of the first principles of any theory that pretends to be democratic is that a Nation should govern itself. A Nation, like a man, is an Individual, with a temperament, a character, a past which influences its present, and a present which will influence its future. We may even go further and say, that the mission of each Nation to the world, and its own National perfection—the accomplishment of its destiny—influence its present, just as the place to which we are journeying influences the direction in which we are now walking, if our object is to reach a city in the south, we do not walk northwards, and the position of that city will determine many of the happenings on the road. For a Nation, like a man, is an embodiment of a fragment of the Divine Life, and that Life imposes on that embodiment, as it unfolds its own special characteristics. India, above all other Nations, can recognise this truth, for Hinduism, the National Religion, has, as its central teaching, that Brahman is All, that there is no Life but His. Other Nations, deluded by the heresy of separateness, may scoff at the idea of Divine Guidance of each Nation, of a Divine Mission entrusted to each Nation, of a Divine Plan for evolution into a perfect whole. But the Hindu dare not do so. For to reject such a fact is to deny the central doctrine of his magnificent religious heritage, to be a traitor to the Ideal which has made India the most ancient of living peoples, and is the secret of her immortal Youth.

It may fairly be asked "If you think that India and Britain have been linked together in consequence of Divine Guidance, and you also think that India must regain her Freedom or perish, how do you reconcile the contradiction?" My answer is that each country had developed to excess its characteristic qualities, and therefore each needed for correction close contact with the other for the sake of their future Mission to the World, that object has been gained, and the continuance of India's subjection is injurious to both. The old Greek teaching that the excess or the deficiency of a virtue is a vice, has been demonstrated in India, the doctrine of Dharma, duty, obligation, had been carried to excess, and ill-judged submission to wrongly exercised authority had led to tyranny on one side and servility on the other, the National character had thereby deteriorated, the strong had grasped privileges and rejected duties, and the weak, yielding to injustice, had undermined the virility of the people. Britain, on the other hand, had asserted Rights and neglected the corresponding duties, and was well on the road to anarchy, arrogance had taken the place of responsibility, and pride of wealth, divorced from social obligations, was leading her towards the fatal path of the denial of the Law of Brotherhood. The crisis has now been reached, India has learnt her lesson and is asserting her Right to Freedom, has Britain learnt hers, the Duty of respecting the Rights of others, without regard to color or Nationality?

Because of this fact that a Nation is a biological Individual—made up of many smaller individuals, as a man is made up of many individual cells—it is necessary for the orderly evolution of Humanity that each Nation

should build up its National character and temperament, as its contribution to the final perfection of the whole, and that is the cause of the instinct of man—apart from his reason, though the latter confirms it—claiming the Right of each Nation to be free, just as it asserts the right of each human being to freedom, in each case limited by the freedom of other men. Neither a man nor a Nation can be entirely free, unless the man be an isolated being, or the Nation a small colony in an uninhabited country. If we desire complete freedom, we must live quite alone, out of touch with all others, and against that our nature rebels. In Society we have laws, customs, conventions, which limit our freedom, but increase our happiness and quicken our evolution.

This freedom of a Nation, of a man, is a necessity for healthy evolution, and for the desirable differences of character and temperament, later to be blended into a greater and more beautiful whole than any of the parts could separately achieve. As an architect draws his plan of a noble edifice and assigns to overseers the various parts of the building, so does the Great Architect draw His Plan, and assign to the Nations, as overseers, their respective parts. And as, if the overseers work out each his portion, the whole edifice will unite in perfect harmony the parts separately built, so if the overseer Nations evolve accurately to Plan, the whole will ultimately form a mighty Temple, perfect in all its parts and honorable to the Builder and His overseers.

On such a sure foundation, on this rock of Truth, are the Rights of Man and of Nations based. They cannot evolve into Beauty if they are frustrated in the growth of their individual lives. A man must be left free to shape

himself, and not be forcibly hammered into a mould prepared by somebody else, who claims to know better what is good for him than he knows himself. A Nation must shape herself, and not be forced into the mould of another Nation, like a tree carved into an animal shape, its own beauty and grace of waving branches and natural form destroyed, forced to become a stiff caricature of another form of life, without its bounding joy of active movement, and its changing curves of pliant muscles, each more lovely than the last.

### **Which Side should Prove Its Case ?**

My position, then, is that it is not for me to prove that India has a right to rule herself, to manage her own affairs, that goes without saying. It is for Britain to prove that she has a right to govern India, and to manage her affairs for her. It is not enough justification to say that she does it better, since to do it at all is a usurpation. Though it is not necessary, I am prepared to prove that Britain, judging by the results, has governed India much worse than India governed herself, and the abounding proofs of this will form the content of this book. None the less, the proofs are unnecessary, as it is unnecessary to prove that a dog waddling along on his hind-legs is less graceful and beautiful in his movements than the same dog bounding along in joyous gambols in the sheer delight of rapid, untrammelled motion. But the Briton likes to see the dog waddling on his hind-legs and to feel how well he makes him do it, he likes to force his form of civilisation on every Nation he rules, hence he is a good, effective and successful, though often brutal, colonist among uncivilised peoples, but with a highly civilised Nation he arouses

intense irritation As Emerson says

[The Englishman] sticks to his own traditions and usages and so help him God! he will force his Island bye laws down the throat of great countries like India China Canada Australia

He wishes to teach India *his* form of Democracy, and forgets that

the East is the parent of Municipalities Local Self Government in the widest acceptation of the term is as old as the East itself (Chisholm Anstey)

The people of India are quite capable of managing their own affairs and the Municipal feeling is deeply rooted in them The Village Communities each of which is a little republic are the most abiding of Indian institutions (Sir John Lawrence 1864)

Anyone who has watched the working of Indian Society will see that its genius is one to represent not merely by election under Reform Acts but represent generally by provisions every class of the community When there is any fellow citizen to be rewarded or punished there is always a caste meeting and this is an expression it seems to me of the genius of the people as it was of the old Saxons to gather together in assemblies of different types to vote by tribes or hundreds (Sir Bartle Frere 1871)

The germs of Home Rule already existed not only in the traditional institutions of the rural communes so often described but in towns and cities where in whatever leading strings local bodies regulated the conservancy and the watch and ward of the streets (Keene)

The question is not how to train Indians to copy British institutions but how to restore the Indian institutions which the British have destroyed

Let me here confess that most of the above are really secondary reasons for winning Home Rule The vital reason the one reason that overbears all others is the fact mentioned above that a Nation is an individual animated by a Fragment of the Divine Life and cannot express herself while bound on a steel frame even were

that steel-frame as perfectly made as it is distorting I repeat what I said on this in the speech already quoted

### **The Vital Reason for Swaraj**

Self-Government is necessary to the self respect and dignity of a People, Other-Government emasculates a Nation, lowers its character, and lessens its capacity. The wrong done by the Arms Act, which Raja Rampal Singh voiced in the Second Congress as a wrong which outweighed all the benefits of British Rule, was its weakening and debasing effect on Indian manhood "We cannot," he declared, "be grateful to it for degrading our natures, for systematically crushing out all martial spirit, for converting a race of soldiers and heroes into a timid flock of quill driving sheep" This was done not by the fact that a man did not carry arms—few carry them in England—but that men were deprived of the *right* to carry them A Nation, an individual, cannot develop his capacities to the utmost without Liberty. And this is recognised everywhere except in India As Mazzini truly said

God has written a line of His thought over the cradle of every people That is its special mission It cannot be cancelled, it must be freely developed

For what is a Nation? It is a Spark of the Divine Fire, a fragment of the Divine Life, outbreathed into the world, and gathering round itself a mass of individual, men, women and children, whom it binds together into one Its qualities, its powers, in a word, its type, depend on the Fragment of the Divine Life embodied in it, the Life which shapes it, evolves it, colors it, and makes it One The magic of Nationality is the feeling of oneness, and the use of Nationality is to serve the world in the particular way for which its type fits it This is what

Mazzini called "its Special Mission," the duty given to it by God in its birth-hour. Thus India had the duty of spreading the idea of Dharma, Persia that of Purity, Egypt that of Science, Greece that of Beauty, Rome that of Law. But to render its full service to Humanity it must develop along its own lines, and be Self-Determined in its evolution. It must be Itself, and not Another. The whole world suffers where a Nationality is distorted or suppressed, before its mission to the world is accomplished.

### **Is the Cry for Freedom Selfish?**

The cry of a Nation for Freedom, for Self Rule, is not a cry of mere selfishness demanding more Rights that it may enjoy more happiness. Even in that there is nothing wrong, for happiness means fullness of life, and to enjoy such fullness is a righteous claim. But the demand for Self-Rule is a demand for the evolution of its own nature for the Service of Humanity. It is a demand of the deepest Spirituality, an expression of the longing to give its very best to the world. Hence dangers cannot check it, nor threats appal nor offerings of greater pleasures lure it to give up its demand for Freedom. In the adapted words of a Christian Scripture, it passionately cries "What shall it profit a Nation if it gain the whole world and lose its own Soul? What shall a Nation give in exchange for its Soul?" Better hardship and freedom, than luxury and thralldom. This is the spirit of the Home Rule Movement, and therefore it cannot be crushed, it cannot be destroyed, it is eternal and ever young. Nor can it be persuaded to exchange its birth-right for any mess of efficiency-pottage at the hands of the bureaucracy.

### Stunting the Race

Coming closer to the daily life of the people as individuals, we see that the character of each man, woman and child is degraded and weakened by a foreign administration, and this is most keenly felt by the best Indians. Speaking on the employment of Indians in the Public Services, Gopal Krishna Gokhale said

A kind of dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race is going on under the present system. We must live all the days of our life in an atmosphere of inferiority, and the tallest of us must bend, in order that the exigencies of the system may be satisfied. The upward impulse, if I may use such an expression, which every schoolboy at Eton or Harrow may feel, that he may one day be a Gladstone, a Nelson, or a Wellington and which may draw forth the best efforts of which he is capable, that is denied to us. The height to which our manhood is capable of rising can never be reached by us under the present system. The moral elevation which every Self-Governing people feel cannot be felt by us. Our administrative and military talents must gradually disappear owing to sheer disuse, till at last our lot, as hewers of wood and drawers of water in our own country, is stereotyped.

The Hon Mr Bhupendranath Basu has spoken on similar lines

A bureaucratic administration, conducted by an imported agency, and centring all power in its hands, and undertaking all responsibility, has acted as a dead weight on the Soul of India stifling in us all sense of initiative, for the lack of which we are condemned, atrophying the nerves of action and, what is most serious, necessarily dwarfing in us all feeling of self respect.

In this connection the warning of Lord Salisbury to Cooper's Hill students is significant

No system of Government can be permanently safe where there is a feeling of inferiority or of mortification affecting the relations between the governing and the governed. There is nothing I would more earnestly wish to impress upon all who leave this country for the purpose of governing India than that, if they choose to be so, they are



the only enemies England has to fear They are the persons who can, if they will, deal a blow of the deadliest character at the future of England

I have ventured to urge this danger, which has increased of late years, in consequence of the growing self-respect of the Indians But the ostrich policy is thought to be preferable

This stunting of the race begins with the education of the child The Schools differentiate between British and Indian teachers, the Colleges do the same The students see first-class Indians superseded by young and third rate foreigners, the Principal of a College should be a foreigner, foreign history is more important than Indian, to have written on English villages is a qualification for teaching economics in India, the whole atmosphere of the School and College emphasises the superiority of the foreigner, even when the Professors abstain from open assertion thereof The Education Department controls the education given, and it is planned on foreign models, and its object is to serve foreign rather than native ends, to make docile Government servants rather than patriotic citizens, high spirits, courage, self respect, are not encouraged, and docility is regarded as the most precious quality in the student, pride in country, patriotism, ambition, are looked on as dangerous, and English, instead of Indian, Ideals are exalted the blessings of a foreign rule and the incapacity of Indians are constantly inculcated What wonder that boys thus trained often turn out, as men, time-servers and sycophants, and, finding their legitimate ambitions frustrated, become selfish and care little for the public weal? Their own inferiority has been so driven into them during their most impressionable years, that they do not even feel

what Mr Asquith called the "intolerable degradation of a foreign yoke"

It is not a question whether the rule is good or bad German efficiency in Germany is far greater than English efficiency in England, the Germans were better fed, had more amusements and leisure, less crushing poverty than the English But would any Englishman therefore desire to see Germans occupying all the highest positions in England? Why not? Because the righteous self-respect and dignity of the free man revolts against foreign domination, however superior As Mr Asquith said at the beginning of the War, such a condition was "inconceivable and would be intolerable" Why then is it the one conceivable system here in India? Why is it not felt by all Indians to be intolerable? It is because it has become a habit, bred in us from childhood, to regard the sahib log as our natural superiors, and the greatest injury British Rule has done to Indians is to deprive them of the natural instinct born in all free peoples, the feeling of an inherent right to Self Determination, to be themselves Indian dress, Indian food, Indian ways, Indian customs, are all looked as second-rate, Indian mother tongue and Indian literature cannot make an educated man Indians as well as Englishmen take it for granted that the natural rights of every Nation do not belong to them, they claim "a larger share in the Government of the country," instead of claiming the Government of their own country, and they are expected to feel grateful for "boons," for concessions Britain is to say what she will give The whole thing is wrong, topsy-turvy, irrational Thank God that India's eyes are opening, that myriads of her people realise that they

are men, with a man's right to freedom in his own country, a man's right to manage his own affairs India is no longer on her knees for boons, she is on her feet for Rights It is because I have taught this, that I am President of this Congress to-day.

This may seem strong language, because the plain truth is not usually put in India But this is what every Briton feels in Britain for his own country, and what every Indian should feel in India for his This is the Freedom for which the Allies are fighting, this is Democracy, the Spirit of the Age And this is what every true Briton will feel is India's Right, the moment India claims it for herself, as she is claiming it now. When this Right is granted, then will the tie between India and Great Britain become a golden link of mutual love and service, and the iron chain of a foreign yoke will fall away We shall live and work side by side, with no sense of distrust and dislike, working as brothers for common ends And from that union shall arise the mightiest Empire, or rather Commonwealth, that the world has ever known, a Commonwealth that, in God's good time, shall put an end to War

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## CHAPTER I

### EDUCATION, PAST AND PRESENT

There are comparatively few persons, Indian or English, outside those who have rendered themselves fairly familiar with Indian History as it really is—not as it is written by foreigners, ignorant of the language of its great literature, and misled, when coming into contact with its people, by the nature of a civilisation so different from their own—who have any but vague and crude ideas of India, as she lived and wrought between, say, 5000 B. C. and 1857 A. D. It is true that scholars in Europe, in their pursuit of philosophy and religion, especially the former, met its magnificent literature and studied it with delight and admiration, but they studied it as they studied the literature of any dead Nation of the past, and did not trouble themselves about the character and conditions of the race which produced the authors of the literature. If they thought of them at all, it was as an ancient people with a fine civilisation, perhaps, in their own time, but now only existing as an inferior race, like the fellahs of Egypt. They were interested in their own special subjects, and did not go outside them. As to political and social conditions, they thought little, and, indeed, it is only of late years that some of the books, dealing with what we now call Political Science, have been unearthed and translated into English. They lay in libraries of former generations. Even now, we have only a few. But Indian scholars have studied them and some English writers have also joined in the research work, so that we have a number of valuable and reliable books, throwing a light

on the Past, and also proving the continuity of Indian History during a period of many thousand years. In addition to this, much material has been collected by the Governments of India, Provincial and Central, giving us connected links through the period between the old history and later times, inscriptions cut into the walls of stone buildings, inscriptions sometimes even whole poems, cut into rocks, metal plates dug up in excavations, vernacular histories, and stories—a mass of material

The British in Britain remain ignorant, but some of the British officials in India have contributed useful monographs, and among those who were here, dealing with English Education, were some who have studied materials found in India, and have thus contributed to our knowledge of the Past. The younger generations of Indians have studied the books written by their own countrymen, and have been inspired by them. But the mass of the British rest contented in their ignorance. Educated Indians now realise how utterly misinformed they were during the period of their English education by the "Indian Histories," written by foreigners with a natural bias, as well as with a view to flatter Britain and their countrymen "at home," by exalting their idea of Britain's greatness so that the British in their own land might feel a complacent pride in their achievements and their generous uplift of India as their "Great Dependency." Also it was desirable that Indian boys at school and Indian young men at college should be brought up with a due sense of their own inferiority, and a due feeling of the gratitude they owed to the British Nation, and might write pretty little essays on "The Blessings of British Rule" while their

young hearts burned with anger over the degradation of being ruled by a foreign Nation. The movement for introducing religious and moral teaching into schools and colleges, and uniting with it the inculcation of a strong feeling of patriotism, did yeoman's service in this direction. The Muslim School and College at Aligarh, the Central Hindu School and College at Benares—both now chartered as Universities—the Council for National Education in Bengal, the School founded by Hanumanta Rao at Masulipatam, and other Schools and Colleges scattered over the country and conducted on similar lines, have educated a generation who know their country's Past, are therefore able to estimate the degradation of their country's Present, and who are resolute to restore her to her place among the great Nations in the Future, by restoring to her the Self-Government which she has lost.

Education admittedly lies at the root of a Nation's welfare. How then was India educated up to the middle of the eighteenth century, and how is she being educated now, since the middle of the nineteenth? The space between these two dates is a period of decay in Education, the education of the masses received its death blow in 1816, with the destruction of the village self-government, and that of the higher classes its misdirection in 1854, when English was made the medium of instruction.

### THE PAST

We may consider Education under two heads. I. The Special Education of those whose outstanding intelligence or high rank demanded the best training the country could give. The results of this were represented to the outside world by great literature, by learned men along the

many lines of study followed, by the liberal training of the ruling classes, which re-acted on the arts and crafts of the actual handicrafts-men and kept them at a high level, and II the General Education of the masses of the people, so that we find them literate, so far as their own vernacular was concerned, and with a distinct culture, which trained them in harmonious living, and in all that was necessary for the wealth and prosperity of the Nation

Under I, we shall consider the Hindu Education, which gave to the World the Hindu Sacred Books, the Epics, the Purānas, the Darshanas, the Yoga Shāstras, the Arthashāstras and Nītiśāstras (or Political Treatises), and, later, the Commentaries, Grammars, Dramas, etc Then came the harmonious period in which Hindus and Buddhists studied side by side, and lastly, the changes with the coming of the Muslims These were all Indian, the two earlier indigenous, the third imported, but becoming naturalised and enriching its predecessors English education was and remained foreign and denationalising in its effect, although containing the stimulus and the inspiration which were exactly what were needed and produced most unexpected results.

#### **The Ancient, or Hindu Age**

The Highest Education of the Past in India that produced its greatest Literature was of a kind that cannot be reproduced in modern days, for it demanded a man's whole life, the earlier part thereof consecrated to study accompanied by much meditation, and the later to the practice of Yoga and the teaching of specially-trained pupils, who were to become teachers in their turn "The Veda" was "*the Knowledge*," which had come down through an unknown antiquity, had been re arranged,

re-edited as it were, at long intervals, to suit the capacities of the period, the essence was spoken of as Eternal. On this we need not dwell. Teaching consisted in the statement of a philosophical or metaphysical truth, made to highly trained pupils, who were left to discover and work out its full content. The Brahma Sutras, for instance, were as the head-notes of long instructions, hence the immense later development of commentaries, such as the Darshanas, and commentaries again on those. The system, as we know it later, was not so much aimed at giving what we should call teaching, as at developing exceptional strength, power, and depth of intellectual faculty, so that the students might be able to grapple with the deepest problems of existence, and unravel them by intellectual development, and the practice of Yoga. This was the Forest Period, wherein great Sages lived in retirement, with bands of men who consecrated their whole lives to the search for Wisdom. The gigantic output of that period is the unparalleled Sacred Literature of India, a monument of what intellect can compass, and wisely directed knowledge of psychology, inspired by devotion, can achieve. This Forest Period was the fountain-head of Religion, Philosophy, Science and Ethics, all these flowed forth and irrigated India, as the great rivers of India are ever fed from their Himâlayan springs.

The curriculum in this Forest Period would be amazing, if we did not find it outdone in later ones, in the Middle Period. In the *Chhândogyaopanishat* (VIII 11 2) we find Nârada saying, in answer to an order, "Relate to me what you know," the following enumeration

I have read Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sâma Veda, the



fourth the Atharva Veda, fifth the Itihâsa, grammar, rituals, the science of numbers, physics, chronology, logic, polity, technology, the sciences cognate to the Vedas, the science of of spirits, archery, astronomy, the science of antidotes, and the Fine Arts

These last are 'Shilpa," and include architecture, music, singing, painting, etc

It is this great literature, belonging to India as a whole, the knowledge on which her sublime religion is built, that is the rock on which India's Nationality is firmly founded. The absurd idea that her feeling of Nationality has grown out of British Rule is too silly for discussion, as is the statement that she had no common name. The English "man in the street" has never heard of Jambudvîpa, of Aryavarta, the land of the Aryans, of Bhârata-varsha, the land of the Bharatas. He has never heard of the Hindu prayers which name the seven sacred cities in extreme north and extreme south of India, as in extreme east and west, nor of the pilgrims who travelled to these, familiar to every Hindu in his daily prayers. The philosophical and religious literature is common to all India, and is studied all over India. The same Rishis, and Sages, and Saints are revered all over India, and every Indian is equally proud of Them. These are the foundations, in the thought and life of her people, of their sense of Nationality. A modern Empire is too frail a basis for a Nation that existed while Britain was a swamp, which has contained many Empires, and which Britons have ruled as an Empire only since 1858, with a hundred years before of a Merchant Company, warring, annexing, plundering, with a record of which the less said the better. There have been larger and longer Empires in India than the British

one, but no one looks to them as the basis of Indian Nationality, it has far deeper roots

During the later part of the Forest Educational Period we find institutions of learned men, resembling in their functions the French Academy, such as the Sanghams of Madura, whose imprimatur was sought by writers as the stamp of merit on their works And then came the great Universities of India, the fame of which spread over Asia, and, later, over Europe, so that students flocked to them from neighboring lands But it is interesting to note that these Universities, huge as they were, were still influenced by the love of natural beauty, and the shutting out of all that was extraneous to study, inherited from the Forest Period

The University of Takshashilâ, modernised into Taxilâ, in the far north (twenty miles north-west of the present Rawalpindi), was an exception to this rule, anyhow in its later days, for it was on the great trade high-road between Hindustân and Central Asia, but it was situated in a beautiful, well-watered valley, surrounded by a girdle of hills May be, that when it was founded it was solitary, for we read in the Buddhist *Jâtakas* of dangerous forests and of perils on the way, for students came to it from distant parts of India But in the days of Alexander the Great it was a huge city, and the country round was "thickly populated" It is mentioned in the *Mahâbhârata*, that King Janamejaya, who had conquered it, held his Snake Sacrifice there It is significant of the respect paid to learning that Takshashilâ became part of the Kingdoms of seven different Nations, including Persia Between the Persian annexation in B C 521 and about A D 510, the

city was occupied by seven different Nations, yet until A. D. 455, when it was totally destroyed by the savage White Huns, it was left prosperous and continued to be a great centre of learning protected by each conqueror.

Many sons of Kings and Princes in India were sent to Takshashilâ, and we read how they were allowed no money and lived plainly and frugally, they carried the teacher's fee, but when a Prince broke a poor man's food bowl and the owner asked for its price, the Prince gave his name and that of his State, and promised to repay it after his return, but he was there entirely without money, and he paid it. Poor lads of promising intellect were taught equally with Princes, and they were penniless together, sometimes the poor students paid by household work, sometimes they promised to pay when their education was finished, either by earning or begging, and faithfully they paid. Professor Radhakumud Mukerji remarks on Takshashilâ

The fame of Takkasîla (Taxilâ) as a seat of learning was, of course, due to that of its teachers. They are always spoken of as being 'world renowned' being authorities, specialists and experts in the subjects they professed. And it was the presence of scholars of such acknowledged excellence and wide spread reputation that caused a steady movement of qualified students drawn from all classes and ranks of society towards Taxilâ from different and distant parts of the Indian Continent, making it the intellectual capital of the India of those days. Thus the various centres of learning in the different parts of the country became affiliated, as it were, to the educational centre or the central University of Taxilâ, which exercised a kind of intellectual suzerainty over the wide world of letters in India.

Fa-Hien, a Chinese traveller, mentions other great Buddhist sanctuaries in the north-west that were vigorous and flourishing in the early part of the fifth century A. D. The curriculum was extensive, as seems always to have

been the case. Mr. Bimala Charan Law speaks of it as a "seat of learning in Sanskrit and Pali literature," and we hear from various sources that they taught "the eighteen Vijnas and the Shilpas, words used for literature and science, and for Arts and Crafts. The use of arms was taught, as we read of skill in archery and javelin-throwing. A student must already be educated before admission, and must be 16 years old at least.

The famous University of Nadiya was founded about 1603, and the students were extraordinarily devoted to learning, recalling, as I have said elsewhere, Alexandria in the days of the Athanasian controversy, when a shopman would discuss with a customer the relations between the Persons of the Christian Trinity. The Nadiya students were for ever discussing, they had controversial tournaments, and sometimes, I regret to say, contested then points so hotly that they came to blows. It was still going on in 1867, when Professor Cowell visited it. And even as late as 1908, there were 30 *Tolas* (Colleges) there, each teaching a single subject, with 250 pupils—a sad remnant of its ancient glory.

#### **The Middle or Buddhist Age**

Takshashila, we have seen, was destroyed in A. D. 455 by the White Huns, and half a century before, the Chinese traveller, Fa-Hien, had spoken of the great Buddhist sanctuaries of the North-West as flourishing. But he gives no details so far as I know. He travelled on southward (he was in India from 399 to 414 A. D.), and near the famous city of Pataliputra (now Patna), in the powerful Kingdom of Magadha, he found, early in the fifth century, the King engaged in the building of a great *Vihāra*, on the bank of the sacred river Ganga, at

Nalanda, a small village, but situated in very beautiful surroundings chosen by the Sage Nagarjuna in the preceding century for the site of a Vihâra. His pupil, Aryadeva, took up the direction of the work, and three successive Kings took over the responsibility of carrying it out. At Fa Hien's visit it was still a-building, and it was only completed in the middle of the fifth century by the fourth royal benefactor, King Baladitya. The large Buddhist Viharas were always, apparently, powerfully influenced by the old Forest Ideal, for they were raised away from cities, occupied a very large area of land, shut in by a high wall. Students were only admitted through carefully guarded gates, where the "Dvâra Pandita" examined them, to see if they were already sufficiently educated to deserve admission. The Vihara was partly a monastery, in which a large number of the monks devoted themselves to the higher learning and the special work of the Sangha, while others, though continuing study, carried on the University and taught the students. Every Buddhist boy—the custom prevailed in Burma down to the present century—became a "monk" during his boyhood, and was educated in a monastery. Hindu Temples had a school attached to them, and the Muhammadans when they settled down, had schools similarly attached to their Mosques. It was this relation between religion and education which made literacy universal until the Village System was destroyed by the East India Company in 1816. No village was without a Temple, and none, where there were Muhammadans, without a Mosque. In small villages, the village priest was also schoolmaster. In large villages, there was a separate schoolmaster, as we see from the lists of village officials, while innumerable Toles and Madrasahs carried

on the higher education, and the great Universities kept up the profounder learning, and drew students even from foreign countries. The extraordinary respect paid to learning—without regard to sex, I may remark in passing—supported students and poured huge gifts on distinguished teachers, and on the Universities made famous by their presence.

To return to Nalandâ. The splendor of its architecture was as great as the natural beauty of its site. Here are two descriptions of it, the first from Mr J Talboys Wheeler, quoted by Rao Sahab Krishna Rao Bhonsle in *South Indian Research*, and the other by Hiouen-Tsang (629 to 645 A. D.), another Chinese traveller, who gives much valuable information about the India of the seventh century. Here are the reports.

The huge monastery was a vast University. Towers, domes and pavilions stood amidst a paradise of trees, gardens and fountains. Ten thousand Buddhist monks and novices were lodged and supplied with every necessary. All the inmates were lodged, boarded, taught and supplied with vestments without charge. They studied the sacred books of all religions. In like manner, they studied all the sciences, especially arithmetic and medicine.

Hiouen-Tsang says

The richly adorned towers were arranged in regular order, the pavilions decorated with coral appeared like pointed hill tops, the soaring domes reached to the clouds, and the pinnacles of the Temples seemed to be lost in the mist of the morning. From the windows one could see the movements of the winds and the clouds, and above their lofty roofs the sun and moon could be seen in conjunction. All around, pools of translucent water shone with the pearls of the blue lotus flowers, here and there the lovely kanaka trees hung between them. In the different courts, the houses of the monks were each four stories in height. The pavilions had pillars ornamented with dragons, and beams resplendent with all the colors of the rainbow, rafters, richly carved columns ornamented with jade and richly

chiselled, and balustrades of carved open work. The lintels of the doors were decorated with elegance and the roofs covered with glazed tiles of brilliant colors, which multiplied themselves by reflection, and varied the effect at every moment in a thousand different colors.

Mr Romesh Chandra Dutt, in his valuable work, *Civilisation in Ancient India*, gives the following, from the same observant and careful writer

Our traveller now came to the great Nālandā University, if we may call it by that name. The monks of this place, to the number of several thousands, were men of the highest ability, talent, and distinction. The countries of India respect them and follow them. The day is not sufficient for asking and answering profound questions. From morning till night they engage in discussion, the old and the young mutually help one another. Those who cannot discuss questions out of the *Tripitaka* are little esteemed, and are obliged to hide themselves for shame. Learned men from different cities on this account who desire to acquire quickly a renown in discussion, come here in multitudes to settle their doubts, and then the streams (of their wisdom) spread far and wide. For this reason some persons usurp the name (of Nālandā students) and in going to and fro receive honor in consequence.

Mr Dutt adds

Dr Fergusson justly remarks that what Cluny and Clairvaux were to France in the Middle Ages, Nālandā was to Central India the depository of true learning, the centre from which it spread over to other lands.

On the study of medicine, Mr Dutt remarks:

Medicine appears to have made great progress in the Buddhist Age, when hospitals were established all over the country. The great writers on Hindu Medicine, Charaka and Sushruta lived and wrote in the Buddhist Age, but their works seem to have been recast in the Pauranic Age. But it was in Astronomy that the most brilliant results were achieved in the Buddhist Age. We have seen before that astronomical observations were made as early as the Vaidic Age, and that early in the Epic Age the lunar zodiac was fixed, the position of the solstitial points marked, and other phenomena carefully observed and noted.

Dr. Macdonnell has also commented on the high state of learning, saying that in

Science, Phonetics, Grammar, Mathematics, Anatomy, Medicine and Law, the attainment of Indians was far in advance of what was achieved by the Greeks

As said, some 10,000 monks and students lived in Nālandā. No difference was made there between Buddhists and Hindus, the Sacred Books of both were studied. In the eighth century it still had 8,000 monks and students, but it became gradually overshadowed by the "Royal University of Vikramāshīlā," another huge place, wherein one of its courtyards had room for 8000 people. A third University with 1000 students is mentioned as situated in Odantapurī, but I have no particulars about it, except that it was destroyed in 1199 in the Muslim invasion, in which also perished Nālandā, after seven centuries of splendid life, and Vikramāshīlā after four centuries. There were no less than twenty-two smaller Vihāras in south Bengal, and two others in Magadha. Hiuen-Tsang mentions that there were one hundred Singhāramas in Kashmir alone, the term being applied to schools, colleges, or universities.

Few now-a-days seem to recognise the extraordinary spread of Education in India during all we know of her through the millennia of her history. Perhaps, after her Past is finished with an account of Muslim educational work, people may not be so surprised to read Sir Thomas Munro's evidence before the two Houses of Parliament, in 1813, that there were "schools established in every village", and the remark in a despatch of the East India Company in 1814, that to "this venerable and benevolent institution of the Hindus" was "ascribed the general intelligence of the natives as scribes and



accountants Even as late as 1838, Mr Adams, after investigating typical Districts in the Bengal Presidency, said that there were Toles and Madrasahs "in all the larger villages as in the towns" He also reported that, below these,

in pathashâlâs and maktabas, the age of the scholars was from five or six to sixteen and they were taught reading writing the composition of letters and elementary arithmetic and accounts, either commercial agricultural, or both

That was only 86 years ago<sup>1</sup>

### **The Later Middle or Muslim Age**

We have now to glance over the Muhammadan contributions to Education in India, and see how greatly Muslim Rulers contributed their quota to the noble fabric builded through the Past Many, ignorant of the history of the coming to India of the Musalmans and of their settling down in India as an integral part of the Nation, may be led astray by the records of destruction which writers of history delight to dwell upon, and may, most mistakenly, regard the Muslims as enemies of Education They forget the wise saying of the Great Prophet Himself, who declared that the ink of the scholar was of more value than the blood of the martyr, even though He had in His memory the heroic sufferings of those who died by slow tortures rather than deny their debt to

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<sup>1</sup> The pāthashâlâ was a primary school attached to a Temple the Maktab was a similar school attached to a Mosque A Tole or a Madrasah was what would now be called a High School and second grade College for Hindus and Muhammadans respectively Sixteen was the minimum age fixed for entrance into a University, such as those described Many more details may be read in my Convocation Address to the University of Mysore *Higher Education in India Past and Present* in one of the three lectures—the one on Indian Ideals in Education—delivered by me as lecturer for 1924 under the Kamala Trust of the University of Calcutta and delivered subsequently to the Benares Hindu University and the Lucknow University They contain full references to authorities

Him for the teachings which had purified their lives. The assailants must also forget the glories of the University of Baghdad, and the splendid work of the Moors, who carried to Europe the torch of Science, re-lighted in Arabia, and brought about the Renaissance of that Continent, darkened since, by the Roman Obedience, the light had been trampled out that had shone in Greece, in Egypt, and along the borders of the Mediterranean, in southern Italy and in northern Africa, to blaze into splendor in Moorish Spain .

The first appearance of the White Huns was a terrible portent, for they attacked indifferently all schools, colleges and universities which came in their fierce way. And it is true that the early Muslim invaders, in their hatred of images, destroyed Temples which contained the sacred images of the Hindu Devas or of the Lord Buddha. The hatred was deep, probably because of the gross and cruel idolatry which the Lord Muhammad denounced in Arabia. How deep that hatred was is shown by the fact that no likeness of Him is found to exist, and that no statuary of any kind adorns the marvellous structures which they raised. Magnificent as is their architecture, never is to be seen the finishing touch of beauty shown in sculptured statues. Apart from this, their Art was wonderful, and has enriched India with many a noble edifice, they are described as having "built like giants, and finished like jewellers," and so it was. The name of Mahmud of Ghazni carries with its sound a thrill of horror to most Hindus, yet in his own land he nourished Learning, he encouraged Art, he made his capital splendid, while his Court was crowded with the learned of many Nations. As the Muslim Sultans

settled in India the same phenomenon constantly followed them. Every Court became a sanctuary of learning and of culture, even while we read of a General of Sultân Muhammad Ghorî, that he left not a scholar alive in the many colleges and universities he destroyed. Wars between the great Muslim Chiefs were frequent, yet in the first half of the thirteenth century, one of them, Sultân Altamash, found time to build a Muslim College in Delhi. Sultân Firuz deserves to be immortalised, because instead of breaking into pieces two Ashoka pillars, he brought them to Delhi. He describes himself quaintly enough in the following lines

Among the gifts which God has bestowed upon me  
His humble servant was a desire to erect public buildings,  
So I built many Musjids, Colleges and Monasteries, that  
the learned and the elders, the devout and the holy, might  
worship God in these edifices and aid the kind builder by  
their prayers. The digging of canals, the planting of trees,  
and the endowing with lands are in accordance with the  
directions of the Law.

He also erected at Firuzabad a Madrasah of which Mr Narendranath Law—the author of *Promotion of Learning in India During Muhammadan Rule* (by Muhammadans) a most fascinating book, well deserving study—gives a pleasant picture.

The Madrasah was a very commodious building embellished with lofty domes and situated in an extensive garden, adorned with alleys and avenues and all that human art combined with nature could contribute to make the place fit for meditation. An adjacent tank mirrored in its shiny and placid breast the high and massive house of study standing on its brink. What a charming sight was it when the Madrasah hummed with hundreds of busy students, walking its clean and smooth floors, diverting themselves on the side of the tank or listening in attentive masses to the learned lectures of the professors from their respective seats!

Note again how Beauty was sought in the education

of youth—a strange contrast to modern schools, like railway stations with whitewashed walls. Religion also was ever present, exerting its cultural influence.

There was a big Masjid attached thereto, in which the five compulsory as well as extra prayers were regularly said, the former being performed in gatherings conducted by the Sufis who at other times remained engaged in counting beads and praying for the well being of the Sultân. The Hafizes (those who learnt by heart *Al Quran*) had to recite the whole *Quran* and pray for the Emperor and all the Musalmâns.

And again we meet that noblest form of charity, the support of students

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There was a suitable provision for the bestowal of stipends and scholarships upon the successful students, and over and above these, every inmate of the Madrasah, be he a student, professor or traveller lodging there, received a fixed daily allowance for his maintenance. All these expenses were defrayed out of the State endowments as well as, in this particular case, out of the sums of money that were set apart by the State for being given in charity to contribute to the well being of the Emperor.

We learn of the Kingdom of Jaunpur that it had hundreds of Madrasahs and Mosques, and that stipends were given to teachers and students, "that they might devote themselves to learning, in complete freedom from material needs and anxieties". How different is the fate of our mufassal school teachers to-day! Akbar's love of learning is famous, and he took a keen interest in the teaching of children, smoothing the path for their tiny feet, as well as in the discussions of learned men of different religions and sects. It is interesting also to note that parts of the *Mahâbhârata*, the *Râmâyana*, the *Atharva Veda* and the *Lilâvatî* were translated into Persian by Muslims under a Muslim Emperor, instead of by Hindus under a Mahârâja. A great impulse was given to Arts and Crafts by the wonderful

architecture, the favorite art and science of Shah Jehan

As said already, a large number of Madrasahs and Maktabas still remain in Bengal, but they are diminishing rapidly, as *The Quinquennial Review* shews. In 1907, there were 2051 Madrasahs and 10,504 Maktabas, five years later there were 1446 Madrasahs and 8288 Maktabas.

Of the effect of Muhammadan Rule in India we can say that when they came as invaders and foreigners returning with plunder to their own homes, they were destroyers of Education in India, to them a foreign land. When they settled down and became Indians, when India was their home, then their feelings changed, and they fostered Education and Learning here as they had done in their own countries.

## THE PRESENT

### Tests of A Progressive Government

Mr Gokhale in 1911, remarked that one of the fundamental conditions of the peculiar position of the British Government in this country is that it should be a continually progressive Government'. The position is very 'peculiar, one may say, unique. The British are a foreign Nation, and a foreign Nation of the European Continent. They do not belong even to Asia so that they might have some Ideals in common with a Nation which is essentially, fundamentally, Asian. It is Indian civilisation which has dominated other Asian countries. The Buddhism of China and Japan, of Burma and Siam, reached them from India. It found in China a magnificent philosophy brought from the drowned Atlantis—one of its most exquisite books *The Classic of Purity*, states that it was brought from the famous City of the Golden Gate—and added to it the

perfect Ethic of the Supreme Teacher. In both countries, found the cultural Ancestor-Worship as a practical reality, giving a unique gentleness and reverence to the people. It did not quarrel with these but, as it were, embraced them and worked harmoniously with them. But all that Britain had in common with India was descent from the Aryan Mother, and that was so far-off, before the Mother-Race came down into the great Peninsula, and in successive waves conquered and settled, and permeated the Dravidian civilisation, which had risen high in previous ages, and continued to preserve some of its own features. The emigrations which went to Europe, the Keltic and Teutonic, both settled for a time in the Caucasus, and then, passing into Europe, gave birth to the "Latin" and the "German" Nations. These younger Nations developed their own peculiar qualities of emotion and mind—the special purpose for which they travelled westward—while the Mother carried on her own evolution. When the children had developed these to excess, and the Mother had developed her special qualities also to excess, the British, who were the most liberty-loving Nation of the Teutonic sub-race, were chosen for the great task of uniting the long-separated members of the family, or as mutually to correct each other's excesses of good qualities, excesses which were vices, and thus to create the conditions for a new advance towards the Humanity to be perfected in the future.

Hence the peculiarity of the position of the British Rule over India. The normal right of a Nation is to rule itself, and the subjection of one Nation to another is always recognised as abnormal, unnatural.

Britain had recognised this natural law of differences between Nations, like the differences between the sexes, and between individuals. Her strong assertion of the Right of Nations to Self-Government had led to her being hated in Europe, because she had become the asylum of all rebels, and paid special welcome to the successful rebels, who had freed their countries from foreign yokes. She, above all others, might be expected to help an Eastern Nation, which had carried submission to authority to excess. So Mr Gokhale, as we have seen, recognising the value of the influence, proposed four tests by which to judge whether the British "Government is progressive, and, further, whether it is continuously progressive", whether, in fact, it was helping India to reach the "glorious day" for which Macaulay looked !

We have seen what Education was in THE PAST, whether under Hindu, Buddhist or Muhammadan Rule, and we have seen, by the testimony of the British, that the East India Company found in India an educated people. What is the Education of the people under British Rule? What is its state in THE PRESENT, reckoning from 1816, when that Company destroyed the immemorial Village System, and with it the literacy of the masses? What has the British Government also created as "Higher Education," and what sort of Universities now are found in India, in the place of those we have described and the immense number of others?

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of Mr Gokhalé's statement is given in the Introduction, but I said therein that fuller details would be given in the present chapter and they will be found in its later part on pp 54-57. It is exactly his test which I am applying to the question of Education. They prove up the halt the continued inefficiency of the present administration.

India lived in THE PAST by her Education, which trained all her citizens to discharge the functions necessary for National Life, by her Learning and her Art, which made her the cynosure of the learned of all Nations, and drew them to her Universities and her Courts, also by her Crafts, which made her the wealthiest country in the world, and drew the flights of Western merchants to her, who have reduced her to ignorance and poverty India will die if this continues much longer, if she does not win Swarāj Let us turn to statistics Statistics are dull? These mean the Life or the Death of an Ancient Nation As she lived by her Learning, her Art, by the General Education of her masses, by her Crafts, she is now dying by the destruction of these under British Rule There is yet time to save her life by the restoration to her of her freedom in the self governing Village and in extending areas up to the Central Government<sup>1</sup>

I am taking my figures for the state of Education (and of other matters) at the present time in British India, from *The Statistical Abstract for British India from 1911-12 to 1920-21*, published by the Commercial Intelligence Department, India, in 1923, by order of the Governor General in Council—except in cases where some other source is given I am not aware that there is any authority higher than this, and, as it comes from the Government, it is the Government's case presented by itself

Mr Gokhale introduced his Education Bill in 1911, and

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<sup>1</sup> This is done by the Commonwealth of India Bill prepared by a representative Convention of all political parties, now ready for presentation to Parliament as soon as the forms of the House of Commons permit



in 1917, I stated, as already quoted, that "the percentage to the whole population of the children receiving education is 28, the percentage having risen by 0.9 since Mr Gokhale moved his Education Bill six years ago" In 1923, it was 34 Mr Gokhale calculated that, if the population did not increase, then at the rate of the growth of education when he spoke, every boy would be in school in 115 years, and every girl in 665 The English, in governing their own country, passed an Education Act in 1870, and between that date and 1881 Free and Compulsory Education was introduced, in twelve years, the attendance rose from 43.3 (children of school-going age) to nearly 100 per cent But, it may be argued, England was a western country Very well Take Japan Before 1872, she had 28 per cent of children of school going age in school, in twelve years the proportion was raised to 92 per cent It appears that Nations educate their own children better than they do those of a foreign Nation which they rule And this view is confirmed by the fact that when Education passed into Indian hands in 1921, the Indian Ministers, before the end of 1923, had passed Bills for introducing Free Education in seven Provinces out of nine, in three, Compulsory Education was added, and in the four others, Education was to become compulsory as soon as the Provincial Government could arrange it

The total number of scholars, boys and girls, in Government schools in 1923 was

Secondary Education, Boys	1,130 471
Girls	124 054
Total	<u>1,254 525</u>

Primary Education,	Boys	5,117,419 ✓
	Girls	1 210 754
Total		<u>6,328 173</u>

(This figure is a little over that in the *Abstract*, as there the figures are wrongly added) In private institutions, the numbers for Elementary Schools are 557,341, giving a total of 6,885,576 Even adding these, we have only a percentage of 2.79 how scandalous a figure in the twentieth century out of a population of 247,003,293 In both cases I have left out the Indian States, though the figures in the major States would strengthen the argument in favor of a Nation looking after its own children In the Primary and Secondary Schools the percentage is only 3.07, or, adding the private, 3.16 Even these figures are not all the sad story For every educationist knows that children who leave school in the Primary School stage soon forget everything that they have learnt, and become illiterate The money spent on those who go no further is wasted

Another matter that has to be remembered is that when Macaulay urged English Education, he was looking down with contempt on the great literature of India, and did not realise that, in pressing English Education, he was condemning to ignorance the masses of the people Instead of bread he offered a stone Boys were brought up without any knowledge of the classics of their country They could declaim in English, but not in their mother-tongue There is no subtler way of denationalising a country than to make the language of the upper classes, of the Law and Courts, of the Colleges, a foreign tongue, and to require a knowledge of the foreign tongue for

**Government Service** The Brahmanas took advantage of these conditions and crowded the Law Colleges, the Medical Colleges, the Secretariat. The higher class Non-Brâhmanas, landlords and merchants chiefly, learnt their own languages, but, with the Muslims, did not trouble themselves much about the foreign tongue. Hence they became technically "backward classes," and have only lately begun to covet Government appointments.

Yet English Education did just what was wanted to correct India's excessive deference for lawful authority, its literary masterpieces in defence of Liberty, in denunciation of tyranny, added to the persistent harping of their teachers on the superiority of the English and on the blessings of British Rule, led to the awakening of the ineradicable love of Liberty of the Aryan peoples, and of a desire to share the blessings of British Rule by sharing in it themselves. Thus came into existence the 'educated Indians,' the now detested intelligentsia, a small minority, but the hope of their country. And those who hate them and denounce them do not realise that for Indians they are not a separate class, they are closely tied up with the village folk, the villagers are closely related to them, what the intelligentsia think to-day, the villagers think the day after to-morrow. Hunger is a severe but effective schoolmaster, and the villagers have long memories of what their forbears were before the village freedom was destroyed and the village schoolmasters disappeared.

I began with statistics, let me end with them.

There used to be "a school in every village"

Now there are 201,879 Secondary and Primary Schools, the latter are 191,274, the Secondary are only

10,605 , and there are also 4,051 Technical Schools of sorts, Industrial, Commercial, etc , the area of British India is 1,094,300 square miles , it must be remembered that this is not continuous Even if it were in one block, there would be only 201,879 Schools, Primary and Secondary, to plant over them, and that gives one school to every area of 5 04 square miles

Food for thought over what this means, my readers

INDIA MUST QUICKLY BECOME EDUCATED, OR SHE WILL DIE

I must now draw attention to the fatal omissions in the Government Educational System, the absence of religious and moral teaching, and of sound historical instruction on the Past of their own country, with its instilling of pride in that Past, and of a noble patriotism Boys are fed on the histories of foreign lands and foreign heroes, and know little of their own The greatness of Britain is impressed on their minds, but what of the greatness of their Motherland? The invasion of India and British Rule are represented as the salvation of India, instead of as the cause of her degradation and her poverty

Consider first the injury that had been done to Education, Lower and Higher, by depriving it of the ennobling influence of Religion and Ethics In Britain, that element is present, but in transplanting English Education to India, these were necessarily omitted The English Government in India, being Christian, could not well, it was thought, encourage heathen religions by teaching them in its schools, even although the schools were chiefly filled with Hindu and Muslim children, and supported chiefly by Hindu and Muslim money. They have now become less narrow, and have for many years

given grants-in-aid to the Muslim University at Aligarh, the Hindu University at Benares, and to others which reach a certain educational level. But in their own schools religious and moral teaching is absent, to the great injury of the students.

As has been seen, Religions and the Ethics woven into their fabrics were inseparable in the Past, and were rightly considered necessary to all healthy training of youth. The result of omitting them was not only to denationalise the students by cutting them off sharply from their Past—the most cruel injury that can be inflicted on a Nation—but also to spread among them the scientific materialism of the day, and thus sap the sense of public obligation, of public responsibility, and of the duty of sacrifice for the public good. It is noteworthy that the foundation of the Collegiate Schools of Aligarh and Benares immediately preceded the revival of patriotism in India, and that the spread of Theosophy among the English educated men not only redeemed them from materialism, but also revived their reverence for their ancestral religions. Sir Valentine Chirol, in his famous book on *Unrest in India*, was acute enough to recognise this as one of the roots of that unrest. He saw truly, for patriotism was then fostered as it is fostered in British boys in Britain. Only as Government revises its policy and introduces religious and moral instruction into the schools and colleges under its control, will large numbers of good citizens be developed in them. The late Nizam of Hyderabad, the majority of whose subjects are Hindu, was the first Indian Ruler who introduced into the schools for the use of the Hindu boys, the religious Text-Books issued by the Board of Trustees of the Central Hindu College, Benares.

## CHAPTER II

### THE POVERTY OF THE MASSES

#### Its Causes

The problem of the Poverty of the Masses in India is one of such gigantic proportions that to grapple with it and to raise her people to a minimum of decent life seem to be almost beyond the reach of human capacity. But the causes of that poverty are not obscure, and though the effects appear to be gigantic, it is because the numbers of the people involved are so huge, not because the factors in the causes are many, or difficult to follow in consequence of their intricate interlacings. The extent of the poverty is indeed staggering, and it is that which appals us at the first glance.

Our *Statistical Abstract* gives, as the figures for British India.

With a population under 500 persons, there are 364,138 villages			
"	"	"	1000
"	"	"	2000
"	"	"	5000
Total Number			497,911

The higher number often mentioned includes also those in the Indian States, and to avoid apparent contradiction, from which confusion might arise, it is well to add the figures for the States ruled by Indian Princes. The numbers run as follows :

With a population under 500 persons, there are 152,398 villages			
"	"	"	1000
"	"	"	2000
"	"	"	5000
Total Number			186,849

If these are added to the figures given before, we have a total for all India of 684,760 villages

To deal with nearly 685,000, or even with 500,000 villages certainly seems to be a rather hopeless task, but when we consider the small size of the great majority, the area of each is small and manageable

Moreover, as just said, the causes are few and simple. They are four in number. I. The destruction of the Village System in 1816 by the East India Company, and the substitution of paid officers of the Company for the representatives freely elected by the villagers from among themselves. II. The substitution of small peasant proprietors for the communal holding of the land of the village. III. The destruction of village industries. IV. The changed method and incidence of Government taxation causing debt, and the harassing laws, interfering with the traditional, customary, freedom of village life.

Each of these first three, as named in order, is far-reaching in its effects, and of general application, though modified in the different Provinces by local conditions, by Musalmán occupation, and the creation of large landlords. The indigenous system is best studied in the Madras Presidency up to 1816. The fourth is the cause of endless irritation, modified in detail by inconsiderate legislation, worse in some Provinces than in others, as in Madras where the land-revenue is gathered while the crops are unharvested, forcing the peasant to borrow at an exorbitant rate of interest, mortgaging the unreaped crop—a perverse piece of cruelty on the part of Government (see p.     ). But in order to understand the effects, we must realise the village as it was, the independence and freedom of the life of its people, and the variety of

its interests It must also be remembered that the wealth of the country depended on its villages, and on the high level of their arts and crafts

We must therefore briefly consider the Village as it was, coming down to us from an unknown antiquity, but with so strong a stability that it is regarded by some historians as the reason why India remained living and wealthy while the great civilisations with which she was contemporaneous have crumbled away one after another, and are only known as they have been unburied from the shrouds of earth that enwrapped them, and covered them from human eyes Perhaps they perished because they were all built upon slavery, and their magnificence and their wealth, their pride and their pomp, like the art and culture of Greece, were built on a foundation of slavery, and thus denied the Law of Brotherhood The civilisation of India was built on a recognition of that Law, on a recognition, indeed, of elders and youngers in the duties imposed on them, but as elders and youngers in a single family, giving services and receiving them, according to their capacities and their powers, all forming one Society, organs in a single body

Now, for the first time in her æonian history, is India threatened with Death Invasions only ruffled the surface of a fraction of Bharatavarsha, here and there, if the invasion passed into a conquest, the conquerors settled in the area they had won, and became Indians among Indians India accepted them all, assimilated them all, wove anything they had of worth into her brocaded robe of many colors, added from their treasures some jewel to her gem starred diadem, and went on her



way no less Indian than before, but with an added touch of Beauty, such as Greece gave to her carven images, such as the Mughals gave to her magic architecture

But the work of the East India Company vulgarised her ancient and stately ways, poured scorn on her ideals, showed the arrogance of the self-made man towards her aristocratic delicacy of attitude to life, her reticences over her sacred things, which she would not open to those who could not understand. The Ideals of the whole East were threatened by the hustling crudities of the West, its garish luxury, its raising of wealth as the criterion of social rank, its lack of homage to learning, and its indifference to great Ideals. Japan shewed that the East could meet the West in war, and beat it with its own weapons. India will show that her womb can give birth to a Democracy, refined, cultured, strong, compassionate, and will redeem the world from ruin, if she restores her Ideals as her guides in life, her Ideals which are ETERNAL because they are TRUE. Many-branched are the ways of error, but the Way of Truth is one.

#### **The Village as it was for Millennia**

I feel, as I proceed to give a brief statement of the condition of the Village as it was, that the statement must seem incredible to the English reader, though a household word to an ever-increasing number of educated Indians, and contrasting with ghastly facts to the suffering masses, who hold, treasured in their aching hearts the memory of their Past—so short is the interval that separates them from it—and who realise in their daily suffering the truth of the facts of the Present. They have heard the whisper of a Hope, a Hope which seems to them incredible, too good to be true, but which has

awakened them from their dull apathy, the apathy of despair And Hope, coming to the miserable, means unrest It has been well said that the masses of the people ' never revolt until the sufferings of a revolt are less than *the sufferings of continued submission*' That realisation has not yet reached the patient peasants of India But its precursor, the question "Which is the worse?" is being muttered by them

To the English readers I say Look at the evidences adduced, both as to the Past and the Present conditions of India They are sketched from inscriptions on stones, engravings on metal plates, ancient and modern books, reports of travellers over successive centuries, Government statistics and official enquiries I have not gone into—though others have—the deeper economic causes of England's increasing wealth synchronising with India's increasing poverty, the complete subjugation of Indian to British interests in all the larger questions of National welfare

While the statements may seem incredible to English readers I ask them to remember that the facts given are burning into the hearts of Indians to day, are convincing them that India's very life is threatened by the continuance of things as they are, and that the only remedy is that India shall obtain Home Rule, she is still content to have it in the form of Dominion Status, but freedom to save herself from decay and death, she is resolved to win

## THE VILLAGE SYSTEM

### *Its Antiquity*

Every student of Indian History is struck by the enormous length of time over which the Village System has

persisted In fact, the student never finds India without it, for the Dravidians had Self-Governing Villages before the Aryans came down from Central Asia, and the chief difference was that the village headman was hereditary among the Dravidians, while he was elected among the Aryans I mentioned in the Introduction the fact that Self-Governing Communities were brought to Europe by the emigrations from Central Asia, that had travelled westwards before the tremendous convulsions which completed the destruction of Atlantis to the west of the European Continent, and sank the island of Poseidonis, shook Central Asia, and sent the remaining Aryans southwards They brought with them the Village System which the emigrants had carried westward Sir William Hunter speaks of Central Asia as the Home of the Aryans, whence, he said, they sent out emigrants who settled along the borders of the Mediterranean, others who founded Persia, and others who penetrated further and colonised Europe, giving birth to the Greek, Italian, Spanish, French, Irish and early British Nations Sir Henry Maine also traces to the latest of these, Slav, Teuton, and Scandinavian peoples, and the Angles and Saxons who drove the Keltic Britons westward into Wales and northward into Scotland

It may be worth while to note here that the further the archæological discoveries go, the further back do they throw the antiquity of the Aryans The latest archæological researches in Sindh and the Panjab gear in with the earlier discoveries in Mesopotamia, and destroy the hypothesis that the Elamites pre dated the Aryans. For seals and other articles have been found in north-western India closely akin to, sometimes identical

with, those in Mesopotamia, and the age of the Indian Aryans is again thrown further back. The Aryans flowed down through the Himâlayan passes, as well as through Baluchistan on the West and Assam on the East, in successive waves up to 9000 B C, and it must be remembered that, before the great Aryan capital was built round the White Island, their early ancestors had been in touch with the people on the route along which they had journeyed from Arabia, that went through Mesopotamia. The commercial relations of India with Babylon, placed by Dr Sayce at 3000 B C, showed the high state of civilisation then existing. In fact, history does not ever contact an India poor, uncivilised, without arts and crafts of a high order. This perennial condition was based on its villages, the foundation of the widespread prosperity of its masses, and the source of its over-flowing wealth.

### **The Village Organisation**

The existence of Village Communities in India from time immemorial, with a considerable amount of organisation, is a matter of common knowledge, and in some parts of the country many inscriptions and records have been discovered, which enable us to reconstruct the village life, which continued in the south of India to the last century, and in Burma to our own time. It received its death blow by Sir Thomas Munro's individualistic raiyatwari scheme, and has been losing vitality since 1820. Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyar, in the pamphlet before quoted, remarks

In Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, Book III, Chap x, villagers are contemplated as constructing and maintaining in their corporate capacity works of public utility, and Professor Rhys Davids says "Villagers are described in the Buddhist

books as uniting all their care to build mohallas and rest houses, to mend the roads between their own and adjacent villages, and even to lay out parks" (*Vide Dr Bannerji's Public Administration in Ancient India* p 293, note 2) In Mysore, now, in many districts, the villagers give half a day's work per week free, for works of public utility, and the aggregate value of the work done is astounding. Every village in the times of the *Arthashastra* (4th century, B C) formed an integral part of the general administrative system and the village was the foundation of the governmental edifice. The village government of those days partook not only of the administration of executive, but also of judiciary functions, as will appear from the Ceylon inscriptions dealing with the administration of criminal justice, of communal courts. To the credit of the Madras Government it must be said that, as against Sir T Munro who was a thorough individualist, the Madras Board of Revenue desired in the early years of the last century to leave the authority of the village institutions unimpaired. But Sir Thomas Munro had his way, and the village communities lost their vitality.

The land of the village belonged to the villagers as a community, and the laws laid down for the arrangement of the village gave the plan. The house-sites, including the School and the Choultry (rest house for travellers), round the Temple as centre, round these, arable land, round this, pasture round this, rough forest. The family had its house site, including a yard, a garden for vegetables, and a plot on the left side of the house for flowers, the villagers were enjoined to plant flowering shrubs and trees along the roads. The arable land was allocated each year, if unequal in quality, if equally good, the same families tilled their ground year after year. On the pasture ground, the cattle and flocks fed under the care of shepherds who were answerable for them during the day, the watchman guarded them at night. The rough forests yielded timber, fuel, green manure, and wood for tools, etc. The craftsmen supplied the tools, vessels, fabrics, etc., the necessary articles of village life,

and had assigned to them definite plots of land, cultivated for them by the agriculturalists, whom they in turn supplied with their products. An inscription runs—in a case where some Reddis with their families migrated to a new locality—

To the office of Ironsmith—to the westward a dry field of black soil, in which two tums of grain may be sown, also a field of wet land, watered by the channel, in which 2 tums of grain may be sown

In the *Arthashastra*, in the fourth century B C, we read, in the details laid down for the work of the village accountant, that he must number all the plots, and see to the boundaries, the passage runs

By setting up boundaries to villages, by numbering plots of grounds as cultivated, uncultivated, plains, wet lands, gardens, fences, vegetable gardens, forests, altars, Temples of Devas, irrigation works, cremation grounds, feeding houses, places where water is freely supplied to travellers, places of pilgrimage, pasture grounds, and roads, and thereby fixing the boundaries of various villages, of fields, of forests and of roads, he shall register gifts sales, charities, and remission of taxes regarding fields

Also having numbered the houses as tax paying or non-tax paying, he shall not only register the total number of the inhabitants of all the four castes in each village, but also keep an account of the exact number of cultivators, cowherds, merchants, artisans, laborers, slaves, and biped and quadruped animals, fixing at the same time the amount of gold, free labor, toll and fines that can be collected from it (from each house)

He shall also keep an account of the number of young and old men that reside in each house their history, occupation, income, and expenditure (Book II, Chap xxxv, § 142, pp 178, 179)

The village affairs were administered by a Panchayat, a Council elected annually by the villagers, if the village were large it divided itself into Committees, and each superintended a department, such as Justice—

to which I notice a woman was elected—Irrigation, Roads, and so on. There were certain officers such as the Headman, the Accountant, already mentioned, the Schoolmaster, etc., and certain servants. Travellers were entertained, and we read of a basket of food being hung up every night for undesirable travellers, who did not care to come openly for hospitality. Crafts were many, and carried to a high pitch of excellence, and we read of young princes and nobles, when they left the Universities where these were taught, visiting craftsmen on their way home, and examining them to see that they kept up their work at a high level.

We will later consider some of the testimonies to the welfare and prosperity of the people.

### **The Communal Spirit**

One of the remarkable features of the Village System of the Past was the community spirit which prevailed, and had its root in community ownership of the land. The village belonged to all who were in it, so that anything done by a villager to improve it increased the amenities of the village life in which he shared. The villagers gave their labor to digging wells and tanks and irrigation channels, making roads and planting trees, keeping in order the Temple, originally built by them, and so on. On such village labor, I may quote from my *Lectures on Political Science*

A very important part of village life was the free labor given for common purposes. Roads, temples, tanks, wells, water channels, public buildings, were made by co-operative labor, and where there were State lands, these were cultivated free in lieu of the State share of the produce assigned for the protection granted by the Government or Ruler. In Mysore at the present time, this custom prevails, and through it an immense amount of work is done for the good

of the village In *The Report of the Indian Irrigation Commission, 1901-3, Part 1, p 8*, quoted by Dr Matthai (*Village Administration in British India, p 115*), it is stated that in the Madras Presidency such works irrigate "collectively an area equal to that irrigated by all the larger works which have been constructed by the British Government" Many inscriptions show how much of this was done in the past, both Hindu and Musalmán Rulers making great water courses and reservoirs one of their main cares, while villagers cut out the smaller connecting channels and local tanks The main works in the Tanjore District date back to the tenth century, it is stated The Temples also contributed to such works Kautilya, in the chapters just cited, deals with rewards and punishments to those who help forward, or hinder, or avoid, communal works (*Loc cit p 99*)

In some Indian States, the old customs continue Thus in the State of Mysore, these Panchayats are operating, and the work they do is exceedingly good, and is co operated in by the Government, who have an admirable plan of making grants to the villages according to the amount of labor which the villagers have put into the construction of tanks, of wells, and the many works which are wanted in the village The villagers give voluntary labor, which is not paid for, for these purposes, and then the value of all that labor is calculated by the ordinary wage of the place, and a grant is given by the State proportionate to that, equivalent to that. In the *Administration Report of Mysore (1915-16, p 278)*, on the Village Improvement Scheme, we read that the villagers contributed Rs 47,083 either in cash or in labor during the year, and the Government responded by grants amounting to Rs 44,978.

47 The Report says

The village committees continued to evince much interest in this work, and many works of public utility, such as construction of school buildings, sinking wells and opening roads, clearing lantana and planting trees, were carried out through their exertions throughout the State



They also tilled the land assigned to craftsmen as said, and received free the tools, etc., which they needed and their repairs, in the small area, this was easily arranged, they also tilled the land assigned to the Government of their larger area in exchange for protection, "the King's land," and paid over its crops. When in the past the Ruler rewarded a man with a gift of "lands," a *jâghir*, he gave the crops only, not the land. The position of the Ruler in relation to his subjects comes out very strongly in the rebuke administered by a Buddhist monk, Aryadeva, to a King

What superciliousness is thine, O King! who art a mere servant of the body politic and who receivest the sixth part of the produce as thine wages (Quoted in Lord Ronaldshay's *India A Bird's Eye View* p 136)

Again, a King of Takshashila answered a beautiful woman, who wanted to share his power, with the words:

My love I have no power over the subjects of my Kingdom, I am not their lord and master. *I have only jurisdiction over those who revolt and do wrong* (Ibid, pp 137, 138)

The words I have italicised sum up the duty of protection embodied in the kingly office. How different was this from the power of a western Feudal Monarch or Baron! India was essentially a free country for the good citizen, the man who discharged aright the duties of his position in the Village or in the Kingdom. He had his place, and that defined his obligations, his dharma.

A very interesting side light is thrown on the village life by the demands sent out to no less than 259 Village Assemblies by the Chola King who built the great Temple at Tanjore between 985 and 1013 A. D. (Further details may be found in *South Indian Inscriptions*, an

immense amount of light has been thrown on South Indian History in the invaluable collections of Inscriptions issued by the Madras Government Department devoted to this work, and by the researches, and the comments on the results of researches, by scholars of the Madras Presidency ) A list is given of the persons sent from the villages for service in the Temple Brâhmanas and Brahmacharis, temple treasurers, accountants and servants and watchmen, proficient in dancing, musicians (men and women), singers, pipers, drummers, reciters in Sanskrit and Tamil, were all given houses and allowances. There are also mentioned a potter, a barber, a tailor, a brazier, a goldsmith, and washermen, all also with allowances. It is also noted that where there were more than one of a class, each was separately supported. This variety of such arts as music, singing, dancing, recitation, shews the richness of the village life. There was plenty of amusement as well as work. The Temple services and processions added to the interest of the variegated panorama, and we know also how there were village athletics and sports, lathi-play, wrestling, and the like. These are still found as amusements in the villages. In larger towns, sword-play and dagger-play are still practised, and extraordinary feats of strength are shewn.

#### **Small Effect of Wars**

It was this peculiar custom of the country, the complete autonomy of the Village in its internal affairs, and its self-contained and satisfying social life, with the very small concern which the people took in the special duties of the King, Emperor, or their Viceroys (in divisions of the States of very large extent), that explains the fact, and the reason for so abnormal a fact,

that invasions and inter State wars affected so slightly the prosperity of the people at large, moreover, the invasions, mostly raids, might destroy a limited area and carry off plunder—chiefly jewels, because of their portability. The loss of jewels touches little the life of the people, the country at large was not disturbed. If the local Kings or Republics and their armies fought, the workers and traders took no part in the fighting, which only meant to them a change of Protector, to whom they paid the annual share of the crops. It was to the interest of the fighters not to make desolate, as the motive of the war, on the side of the aggressor, was mostly the increase of the area from which his tribute was drawn. Deserts were unproductive. So we read of agriculturalists ploughing with quiet unconcern within sight of a battle field. Local wars up to a thousand years ago, were between Aryans, who would be friends again when the battles were over.

When the merchants came to India, and were still only merchants, they found commercial transactions carried on verbally, no documents passing. The Vaishya would not break his word nor cheat. There were banks scattered over the country, shewing the general peacefulness while there were wars such as those which the Marathas carried on fiercely with the Mughal Empire. But these did not widely affect the life of the great continent. Even the fierce war which destroyed the Empire of Napoleon III, with all the cruelties of modern warfare, did not throw the comparatively small country of France into chaos. So it was with India, though the foreigners were able to increase their power by taking

part in the local wars, siding with the weaker side to defeat the stronger, and then gobbling up the weaker

### Testimony of Travellers to the Condition of The Masses Under Indian Rule

It is important to notice how foreign travellers confirm the statements in the Itihasa as to the general education and well being of the masses of the people. When we first read the passing remark in the *Rāmāyana*, that every one in the Kingdom of Shri Ramachandra knew how to read and write, that there was no one who was illiterate, we were probably startled. But when we read of the varied education of the people of India, this remark causes no surprise.

The well to-do condition of the people, again, may be judged by the descriptions of popular holidays and from many allusions in the literature. The Village System, also provided against poverty for the communal holding of land did away with the helpless poverty of the "landless men". The arts and crafts which received so much attention from rulers and wealthy men, gave a good market at home for the costly fabrics of the skilled handloom weavers, and the large surplus went abroad. Thus from Kasimbazar, a village in Bengal, were annually exported as late as the seventeenth century, 2,200,000 lbs of silk goods. The merchants who took charters for trading with India from various Monarchs in Europe, did not come to India on a benevolent mission, as trustees sent by "Providence," for the sake of helping a forlorn and poverty-stricken Nation, ruined by the wars of centuries in order to "rescue it from chaos," as is now pretended (vide Lord Sydenham's articles, *passim*). They came to a land overflowing with gold and silver bro-

cades, carpets of silk and gold, satins streaked with gold and silver, embroideries, tufts of gold for turbans, golden net work. An Emperor had a throne of the estimated value of £ 6,500,000. There were works of art of every description, muslins wonderful for fineness, as well as the calicoes so valued in England. The huge fortunes obtained by men like Clive, who 'wondered at my moderation,' all told of a country wealthy beyond compare, and wealthy with her own constantly manufactured articles, ever renewed and replaced as they were exported. And we can trace this continued wealth back and back for millennia. *India was never found poor* until she reached the nineteenth century, A. D. As Phillimore wrote in the middle of the eighteenth century, "the dropping of her soil fed distant Nations," while she clothed in gorgeous garments the Doges of Venice, the great nobles of Italy, the Monarchs of Europe, century after century. Look backwards over the evidence of travellers, who recorded what they found. Travellers in the sixteenth, fifteenth and fourteenth centuries mention with admiration her manufactures, her trade, and the fertility of her soil under irrigation, in some parts yielding three crops a year. At the end of the thirteenth century, Marco Polo records a similar story: indigo, pepper, ginger, cotton, surplus rice were exported, as were buckrams, fine in quality, leather goods, beautiful mats. Similar testimony is found centuries back and back, and Pliny in the first century speaks of the great trade of Rome with India, Arabia and China and the wares being sold at a hundred times their cost. Her ship-building raised much jealousy in England, when Indian-built ships sailed up the Thames, then, the merchants, become rulers, ruined her ship-build-

ing yards, and their descendants taunt her with the absence of a navy, and still, in their good old traditional way, combine against any steamship company formed by Indians, so as to ruin it.

Apart from their wealth, their character stood high, and they enjoyed great freedom Fa-Hien, who spent more than six years in India in the fifth century, speaks with great admiration of "the wealth, prosperity, virtue and happiness of the people. As to their freedom, "those who want to go away may go, those who want to stop may stop" "Most offences," I wrote in 1916, summarising his general statements, "were punished by fines, and there was no capital punishment and no judicial torture Repeated rebellion, however, was punished by cutting off the right hand, but such a penalty was exceptional" The roads were safe (after he reached India), for in all his travels over India he was never attacked by robbers "No one kills any living thing, or drinks wine, or eats onions or garlic" "They do not keep pigs or fowls, there are no dealings in cattle, nor butchers' shops, nor distilleries" Charitable institutions were numerous, and rest-houses were found on the roads In the capital was a free hospital supported by gifts Fa-Hien writes -

Hither come all poor or helpless patients, suffering from all kinds of infirmities They are well taken care of, and a doctor attends them, food and medicine being supplied according to their wants Thus they are made quite comfortable, and when they are well they may go away

Our mind jumps back over seven centuries to Ashoka, and his hospitals for men and *animals*, as well as his tree-planting, and places for travellers

On the roads I have had banyan trees planted, to give shade to man and beast, I have had groves of mango trees planted, and at every half kos I have had

wells dug; rest-houses I have erected, and numerous watering places have been prepared here and there for the enjoyment of man and beast

So wrote Ashoka on one of his pillars in the third century B C.

Let us take the testimony of Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador at the Court of Chandragupta Maurya, as given by Sir William Hunter :

The Greek Ambassador observed with admiration the absence of slavery in India, the chastity of the women and the courage of the men. In valor they excelled all other Asiatics, they required no locks to their doors; above all, no Indian was ever known to tell a lie. Sober and industrious, good farmers and skilful artisans, they scarcely ever had recourse to a lawsuit, and lived peaceably under their native Chiefs. The Kingly Government he portrayed almost as described in the Code of Manu. Megasthenes mentions that India was divided into 118 Kingdoms, some of which, as the Prasi under Chandragupta, exercised suzerain powers. The Village System is well described, each little rural unit seeming to the Greek an independent republic. Megasthenes remarked the exemption of the husbandmen (Vaishyas) from war and public services, and enumerates the dyes, fibres, fabrics and products (animal, vegetable and mineral) of India.

It is also interesting to note that this same well-informed observer wrote :

It is accordingly affirmed that famine never visited India, and that there has never been a great scarcity in the supply of nourishing food.

The huge Empire was divided up and ruled something in the way we now see—omitting the present sub-provincial units of Government—except that the officials were Indians, not foreigners.

It is hardly worth while to record the rapid reduction of the country to frightful poverty in the areas controlled by the young Company as ruler, even before the nineteenth century opened. That was a period of unabashed plundering, naked robbery, and is well

described by Macaulay, after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. He wrote of that awful second half of the terrible eighteenth century.

Thirty millions of human beings were reduced to the extremity of wretchedness. They had been accustomed to live under tyranny but never under tyranny like this. That Government, oppressive as the most oppressive form of barbarian despotism, was strong with all the strength of civilisation.

He quotes a Musalmán historian, who recognises the extraordinary courage and military skill of the English.

But the people under their dominion groan everywhere, and are reduced to poverty and distress. O God! come to the assistance of Thy afflicted servants, and deliver them from the oppressions which they suffer.

*The Imperial Gazetteer* records the results of these oppressions in the awful famine of 1770.

The Hooghly every day rolled down thousands of corpses close to the porticoes and gardens of the English conquerors. The very streets of Calcutta were blocked up by the dying and the dead. [It was] officially reported to have swept away two thirds of the inhabitants (*Loc cit*, II 480).

The "two-thirds" were reckoned at 10,000,000 persons. Between 1770 and 1,900 there were twenty-two serious famines, in addition to the "annually occurring" semi starvation. No one who saw anything of the awful famines of 1896 and 1899 can ever forget their horrors, the nightmare railway stations, into which living skeletons forced their way, holding out skinny hands, and crying in agony to the passengers for food.

Have all these writers, separated by centuries, conspired to deceive the modern Englishmen, and to convince them that Indians cannot rule themselves?

Let us now take a few instances of the recorded conditions of villages when they were merely half-starved, their normal state.



### **The Condition of the Masses under British Rule**

"The substitution of paid officers of the Company for the freely elected Village Council, elected by the villagers themselves," was given by me (on p 60) as one of the causes of the Poverty of the Masses to day These officers naturally look to their superiors, their employers, for their approval, and care not for the respect and love and trust which were bestowed upon their predecessors, when they were really the Village Fathers The village has become a source of revenue not only to the Government, but also to absent landlords, and the small occupiers, whether tenants or proprietors, are hard put to it to make a living Here are some of the records made of the condition of the small agriculturists of the United Provinces, by a Collector, a Commissioner, and other Government officials

Mr Alexander, Collector of Etawah, made the general statement that in ordinary years, the cultivators lived for four months in the year on advances made by money-lenders, who charged high interest, recovering the whole, or more often a part, of the loan when the crops were reaped, and this was confirmed by many of the peasants The raiyat often goes into a manufacturing town and works at a mill, or other factory, to earn the money to pay his tax and rent The laborers' budgets are of poignant interest, shewing depths of poverty unknown in lands which are ruled by their own people

Mr Crookes, Collector of Etah, tells of a man, who was lucky enough to have 17 acres of land, who made a deficit of Rs 15 on the land, and, with bare food and clothing, the deficiency came to Rs 138-9 in the year Another, with seven acres, for which he paid an annual

rent of Rs 40, spent Rs 50 a year on food, Rs 7 on clothing, Rs 2 on furniture, Rs 2 on marriage and funeral expenses, and had a deficit of Rs 22 a year. One who had  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres, and possessed also a pair of oxen and a plough, made a profit of Rs 45 14, in the year. On this lived, or rather starved, five persons. Abe Ram, family of five, had 9 acres, "he has no blanket, and ate the bajra before it was ripe", he had two buffaloes—bull and cow, and a second cow, and sold Rs 18 worth of milk. He earned by labor, away from his land, Rs 15 during the year, his crops he sold for Rs 70 4. His rent was Rs 68 15, so he made a profit on these of Re 1-5. And so one may continue. The full reports, I understand, lie on the shelves of the House of Commons, the bottomless pit in which such reports moulder.

Things have grown worse, not better, since then. On May 18, 1925, Professor Ganguli gave a lecture in Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, on "The Indian Rural Problem," before the East India Association.<sup>1</sup> He deals with the factors which have reduced the agricultural population to its present desperate condition, and his figures, later than those given above, show that the condition is growing worse. The factors are 1, the minute sub division of the land, 2, the necessity of borrowing from a money-lender "for the bare necessities of a primitive agricultural practice", (3) the need of better marketing facilities, (4) the exhaustion of the soil, (5) the physical condition of the peasant

(1) is due, I submit, to the substitution of peasant proprietorship for the communal holding of its land by

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<sup>1</sup> Published in *The Journal of the East Indian Association* at its offices 3 Victoria Street London S W 1

the village in 1816 (2) is due to the fact that the peasant does not raise enough to meet the support of himself and his family, let alone the payment of the Government tax and the interest on the money raised by the mortgaging of his land to the money lender, so that his debt ever increases. On (3) Professor Ganguli points out

As the production is small and the means of transportation extremely inefficient it is practically impossible for the grower to reach the market centres without the intervention of several middlemen. I may mention in passing that rural roads in India are unsatisfactory and that the progress in this direction has been extremely inadequate. The total mileage of metalled and unmetalled roads in the British territory is about 216 000

In considering the problem of marketing we must bear in mind that generally speaking the greater portion of the prospective harvest is held in mortgage to the village trader. Once drawn into the vicious circle which surrounds the Indian markets the cultivator cannot hope to receive the full benefits of the current prices. As an illustration I beg to draw your attention to the following data collected by me in a market near Calcutta.

Crop	Price per 8½lbs on a Certain Date								Crop	
	Mortgaged				Free					
	Crop									
	Rs	A		Rs	A	Rs	A		Rs	A
Jute	5	8	to	6	0	8	10	to	9	0
Linseed	1	8	to	1	12	2	8	to	2	13
Grain	4	8	to	5	0	6	12	to	7	0

The disparity between the profits made by the brokers and dealers and the prices the grower receives is so enormous that in the marketing centres all over the country money lenders congregate as flies over jam and they are soon able to entangle the growers of the neighborhood into permanent indebtedness.

(4) is the inevitable result of the crushing poverty under which the peasant lives, how should he procure manure? The Professor gives the comparative average

production of wheat in bushels per acre in India and in other countries here it is:

AVERAGE YIELD OF WHEAT (1909-1913)

Belgium	37
United Kingdom	32
Germany	32
Egypt	26
New Zealand	25
Austria	20
Japan	20
Roumania	19
Canada	19
Bulgaria	15
United States	14
India	12

Comment is unnecessary.

What is to be said as to (5)? The Professor gives some illuminating figures. He says

Since Indian agriculture depends largely on manual labor, the chief asset must be the output of physical energy of which the worker is capable. As the physical fitness cannot be easily assessed, "the expectation of life" at any specified age may be taken as an indication of physical well being.

In this connection a table based on the data computed by the famous statistician, Dr. Glover, from the official figures for each country is illuminating. "These life expectations mean that, on the average, individuals alive at a given age have the number of years to live stated in the column for that age

EXPECTATION OF LIFE IN YEARS

(Males above, Females below)

Countries	Period	Age 20	Age 30	Age 40
1 Denmark	1906-10	46 30	38 00	29 70
		48 10	40 10	32 00
2 England .	1901-10	43 01	34 76	26 96
		45 77	37 36	29 37
3. Italy	1901-10	43 27	35 94	28 23
		43 69	36 58	29 18
4 Japan	1898-03	40 35	33 44	26 03
		41 06	34 84	28 19
5 India	1901-10	27 46	22 44	18 02
		27 96	22 99	18 49

The table covers the best working period of a peasant's life. In examining the table the discrepancy between the Indian and the other peoples considered is only too apparent and indicates a state of affairs inimical to the development of a vigorous peasantry.

The reason for the shortage of life is obvious enough. The Professor gives it. The half of the agricultural population that used to be said to be always hungry is now two thirds.

Do we obtain from our agricultural land that amount of produce which after meeting the needs of the people must leave sufficient residue for maintaining the balance of trade? Or are we carrying on this National industry as a going concern? If it were possible to make out a profit and loss account for the average cultivator we should then be able to find some explanation why the vast population of India lives on the edge of extreme poverty. A critical examination of the available agricultural statistics for British India from 1911 to 1919 shows that there has been on the average a yearly deficit of about 103 million tons of food grains and pulses and that it cannot be met even if the exports are strictly prohibited. One cannot challenge the conclusions of Professor Dayashankar Dubey that 64.6 per cent of the population lives always on insufficient food getting only about 73 per cent of the minimum requirement for maintaining efficiency. In other words it clearly shows that two thirds of the population always get only three quarters of the amount of food grains they should have.

But this state of semi starvation is chiefly the result of persistent soil erosion and soil exhaustion which have brought the greater part of the cultivated land to its fertility level and if this is allowed to continue the day of reckoning is not far.

I agree. But he has also given other causes. Professor Ganguli remarks quite truly

Population problems and their relation to the productivity of the land have been lately discussed by the Census Commissioner. In 1901 the total population was 294 millions; in 1911 it rose to 315 millions and in 1921 slightly less than 319 millions—that is the total gain between 1911 and

1921 was only 3,786,000 people, or 12 per cent I agree with Professor East of the Harvard University in his conclusion 'that India has reached a point where it is impossible for her to increase rapidly by an excess of births over deaths' / ~

*The Statistical Abstract*, before quoted, gives births and deaths for 1916 to 1920 as follows

	1916	1917
Births	8,856,283	9,379,349
Deaths	6,940,436	7,803,832
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	+ 1,915,847	+ 1,575,517
	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
1918	1919	1920
8,430,560	7,212,415	7,864,232
14,895,801	8,554,178	7,335,654
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
-6,465,241	-1,341,763	+ 508,578

Out of five successive years, the five latest available, two shew an excess of deaths over births, and three an excess of births over deaths. Taking the five years together, the population was 238,481,579, in 1916, and five years later, it had only risen to 238,527,685, or an increase of population of 46,106 in five years.

Mr Gokhale gave, it may be remembered, the average life of the Indian as 23.5 years. Professor Ganguli does not deal with the terrible infant mortality shewn in *The Statistical Abstract*, of babies when one year old. Omitting 1918—the year of the influenza epidemic, the death rate in which was abnormal, as shown below—the death-rate of boys per mille was, omitting decimals (1911-1920), 214, 216, 192, 218, 208, 209, 211, 228, 201. Of girls, 196, 198, 196, 204, 195, 194, 198, 220, 188. Comment is needless. The causes of this shocking mortality are the low vitality of the parents, and the very bad sanitary conditions which

surround the mother. It is to the educated women that we must look to save the children, for it is this which causes the very slow increase in the population, and which even occasionally causes the death-rate to exceed the birth-rate. The disproportion of feminine deaths to masculine between the ages of 10 and 15 is terrible. Mr Ranganatham has pointed out that in every Census, in the ages between 10 and 15, there is a startling disproportion between the number of deaths of boys and of girls. In the period of 1901 and 1911, there were 33,256 deaths of boys, and 3,56,219 deaths of girls. In the following period the girl deaths were only three times as many as the boy-deaths, but the phenomenon continually repeats itself. In the 10—15 group, we cover the ages of child-motherhood. Here is a removable cause, and, therefore, an acceptance of the sacrifice of helpless children to a cruel convention is a veritable slaughter of the innocents.

*In the case of babies born in towns where the mothers are factory workers, the death rate is far more shocking than the above.* In Bombay, H E Lady Wilson, speaking on the infant mortality there, gave the rate in one year as over 600, but the year was not mentioned. She gave other years as above 300 and 400. This huge infantile mortality of course brings down the average life-period.

The enormous death-rate in 1918 must have struck every reader, since the deaths in 1917 were 7,803,882, and in 1919, 8,534,178, while in 1918, they leaped up to 14,895,801. 1918 was the year of the Influenza Epidemic, and we have in that, as in all years of epidemics, an astounding death rate, owing to the low vitality

of the masses, resulting from long-continued semi-starvation.

Another reason of the high death-rate is the childish prejudice which European doctors harbor against the indigenous systems, and the consequent deficiency of medical aid, both in town and country. Indian women shrink from white men-doctors even more than do English women from the brown; and while there is great insistence on the absolute necessity of keeping English doctors in sufficient numbers for the handful of English people here, no one seems to care for the myriads of Indians whom the European crude medicines and methods do not suit. Madras has taken the lead in establishing a Government School for Indian Medicine, thanks to the Indian Chief Minister, the Hon. the Râja of Panagal, and to the justice and the right feeling of H. E. Viscount Goschen, the Governor. The supply of hospitals and dispensaries is scandalously inadequate, largely for the same reason. European doctors do not suit us and they are too costly for us. We prefer the indigenous system, because it understands our constitution better than the other, cures where European science is helpless, and is not so costly.

Let us try to realise the following contrast, put bluntly that its force may be estimated rightly:

Megasthenes, whom I quoted before, said of the cultivators of his time (the fourth century, B. C.) that they raised two crops a year, and had "abundant means of existence". Phillimore, also already quoted, said of India in the eighteenth century, A. D. that "the droppings of her soil fed distant regions". Between these two dates lie two thousand years, during which she was



ruled by her own Princes As long ago as 1837, Mr. Shore, of the Bengal Civil Service, said that "the grinding extortion of the British Government has effected the impoverishment of the country and people to an unparalleled extent"—quoted by Mr Dadabhai Naoroji in his *Un-British Rule in India* Mr Ranadé and Mr. Gokhalé, about sixty years later, pointed out that the amount of the land-tax trenched on the subsistence of the cultivator. We have seen (pp 78, 79) the evidence of members of the British Civil Service in the United Provinces Professor Ganguli (p 82) states that the total out-turn of food-grains and pulses shows a yearly deficit of a little over ten million tons, and that a deficit would be left even if none were exported, and he also accepts the statement that two-thirds of the population always get only three-quarters of the food they require Yet in face of these figures, Professor Ganguli, who appreciates thoroughly the desperate condition and who says that "it is clear that the time has come for decisive action," would entrust the action to those who are well-acquainted with that condition, have allowed it to accrue, and regard it as seditious to state the facts But do not these facts look very much like symptoms of a dying Nation, and urgently demand an immediate change of Government? Some high English officials in Britain and India are lost in admiration of the splendid efficiency of the Civil Service Statistics tell another tale The vital statistics repeat the tale of inefficiency, already told by those I gave on Education, they are from Government Statistics, and I have acknowledged the efficiency of the ICS in secretarial work. When I read that

For years it has been the aim of the British Government

to spread education                      to improve the material condition  
of the people of India,  
I can only regret that this noble aim has been so badly  
carried out by its servants. The "ideal of a prosper-  
ous and contented India" is very far from realisation.

Professor Ganguli demands a Royal Commission as  
a remedy for all these ills. He scoffs at the making of  
Constitutions, as though bad and good Government made  
no difference in the conditions of the people. But these  
terrible conditions are the results of a century of the  
British East India Company rule and sixty-five years  
of rule by the British bureaucracy. Is it not then, time to  
have a Reformed Constitution and, while remaining with  
in the Commonwealth, establish an Indian Government?

Professor Ganguli sums up his argument in the  
following paragraph:

Such are the main problems of Indian rural life. I do  
not for a moment suggest that the Government is oblivious to  
them, but I feel that the time has come for a comprehensive  
measure of rural reconstruction. Democracy in India can  
not be successful unless the rural population is allowed to  
acquire strength to support that form of Government. While  
the sober opinion in India is conscious of the need of pro-  
gressive and expansive adaptation to the conditions brought  
about by her status in the British Empire much now depends  
on the lead from the supreme Government. We have had  
enough of Constitution making and Constitution breaking. It  
is now necessary to get seriously to work at the problems on  
whose solution the salvation of the millions of India depends.  
For, in the words of a Chinese philosopher: "The well being  
of a people is like a tree: agriculture is its root, manufacture  
and commerce are its branches and its life. If the root is in-  
jured and the leaves fall, the branches break away, and the  
tree dies." This is my plea for a Royal Commission for an  
enquiry into the problems of Indian rural life.

Professor Ganguli does not hold the Government  
responsible. Nor do I charge any one Government of  
India as being responsible for the present state of things.

But I do charge the whole series of Governments, compendiously entitled "British Rule," with inefficiency in its administration in vital matters, with the subordination of the interests of India to those of Britain, of the interests of the "ward" to those of the "trustee," with placing on the shoulders of India financial burdens for Imperial necessities far greater than those borne by any Dominion, while denying her Dominion Status, and with a want of imagination and sympathy which unfit them to continue to govern India, and which have led to a practical indifference to the sufferings of millions, entailed by the British policy. This is well seen in the *Government of India Report*, quoted above by Professor Ganguli that 'Occasional famine is only the pronounced expression of continuous scarcity the problem in fact of saving a portion of the population from misery and semi starvation over vast areas of India is an annually recurring one' Could any Rule pass on itself a more scathing condemnation? Compare it with Phillimore's statement already quoted, that in the middle of the eighteenth century "the droppings of its soil fed distant regions" A century and nearly three quarters of British Rule have wrought this ghastly change. The Reforms of 1919, inadequate as they are, have at least given us an Indian Councillor, who has faced the horror of the annual recurrence of famine, and is grappling with it with every prospect of success, at least in the Madras Presidency, and he meets it in the old Indian way—by irrigation, turning desert into fertile soil. From this one striking illustration, we may judge something of the possibilities which open before us, when India ceases to be a tributary State, drained of men and money for the advantage of the British Empire, her Nationals treated with contumely all over that Empire,

except in Britain itself, and even in her own land allowed only a "share" in the Government, a share which can at times be suspended by the unfair use of "emergency powers"

I, who write, was interned in 1917 with my two Assistant Editors of *New India*, for drawing attention to some of the above facts, and pressing for Reforms. The agitation which ensued was so widespread, though absolutely peaceful, that Mr Montagu then Secretary of State for India, announced that the goal of Britain in India was Self Government, and as that was what we had been contending for, we were released. The Government of India Act, 1919, was the result. Much can be done for the people under it, and has been done, but all was ruined when in the third year of the Reformed Indian Legislature, the emergency powers were used to over ride the Assembly on the doubling of the Salt Tax, in flagrant disregard of the statement of Sir M Hailey that taxes would only be levied with the consent of the elected representatives of the people.

There is one agricultural trouble in Madras that should at once be remedied. For when, to the change of payments to Government from a share of the crops to hard cash, is added the levying of the tax while the crops are still in the ground, the tragedy of the Indian Village is completed.

Mr A Ranganatham in his lecture on the "Indian Village As It Is," has given further details of that tragedy, and he knows of that which he writes, having been a Government official as a Tahsildar and a Deputy Collector. He mentions a visit to a village where he found the people in trouble, because they were hard pressed to pay the Government tax. He writes

They have to pay their taxes while their crops are still in the fields, instead of waiting until they are harvested and the farmer can sell at a good price. So they are compelled to go to the money lenders and borrow money at high rates of interest, or *equally unfair terms*. Very often they mortgage their crops in advance and undertake to sell these at some rate which is far lower than the prevailing market price, because of this short-sighted policy of the Government of insisting upon payment of the taxes in full before the raiyat can choose his time, and sell his crop at the most favorable rates to himself. This borrowing so very often means that he has to go without the necessary sustenance in order to repay, or to carry on until, at some later stage, he has again to borrow money and again at higher rates of interest.

This is one of the reasons for the ever-growing indebtedness of the peasant. To pay a share of his crops to the Ruler in the old days was comparatively easy, to raise money to pay the tax while the crops are still in the ground is terribly hard. It is this want of consideration which makes the peasant hate the Government, as well as its agents. This particular and unnecessary cruelty is not found in Bombay.

I strongly advise those who wish to know the sorrowful facts of the inefficiency of British Rule in India, instead of repeating fictions as to its "blessings," to read the plain, simple account given by this late Government Officer, of what is going on to-day in the villages of India. Things cannot last on the present lines. And we are not yet through the tragedy of the lives—if they can be called lives—of our poor. It is these things going on around us, fellow workers of England, which make us so resolute, so insistent, on demanding Dominion Status for the country we love. As Shelley once cried in his agony of sympathy for the sufferings of the English poor—

They are dying while we speak.

And it is not as though the Government did not

know of all this long drawn out torture of perpetual semi starvation, but it presumably thinks that it is inevitable, knowing nothing, in the case of most officers, of Indian history. So it shrugs its collective shoulders, and returns to its paper work. Read the following from a Government of India Report, and then stop and think of the human pain which lies behind the statement that the "problem of misery and semi-starvation is an annually recurring one (partially quoted before) "

Occasional famine is only the pronounced expression of continuous scarcity, or in other words, the complete failure of crops in certain parts of India which are so severe as to attract public notice, are but as the deep and long cast shadows of depression in the agricultural out turn which occur almost every year, that the problem in fact of saving a portion of the population from misery and semi starvation over vast areas of India is an annually recurring one. The ancient rulers resorted from time immemorial to the expedient of storing water in the monsoon for utilisation during the subsequent dry weather. In their simplest form, such storage works consist of an earthen embankment constructed across a valley or depression behind which the water collects. By gradually escaping water from this, a supply is maintained long after the rains have ceased, or after the river in which the reservoir is situated becomes otherwise dry and useless.

Things have moved since 1921, when a little power came into Indian hands. Our Madras Law Member, the Hon Sir C P Ramaswami Aiyar, K C I E, has put an end to a dispute over water which had lasted for thirty years, and has, after much opposition, succeeded in passing a Bill which will irrigate 300,000 acres of land in Tanjore and put an end to the recurring famines there. But his work shows the blessings of Indian Rule in contrast with British.

There have been very numerous difficulties in the Provinces, due to the structure of the 1919 Bill. Into these it is not necessary to go. But I may give, as a specimen,

a statement of the Madras Minister of Development, Sir K. V. Reddi, who said, quaintly enough :

I am Minister of Development minus Forests, and you all know that development depends a good deal on forests I am Minister of Industries without Factories, which are a Reserved subject, and industries without factories are unimaginable I am Minister of Agriculture minus Irrigation You can understand what that means How agriculture can be carried on extensively without irrigation in the hands of those who are responsible for it is rather hard to realise I am also Minister of Industries without Electricity, which is also a Reserved subject The subjects of Labor and Boilers are also Reserved But these, after all, are some of the defects of the Reform Scheme

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## CHAPTER III

### VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

#### **How and Why they were Destroyed**

Next to the destruction of the "Village Republics" in 1816 by the East India Company, comes the destruction of Village Industries, by the same evil policy. The London Merchants came here entirely for the sake of the lucrative trade which they knew they could build up, and Parliament assisted them by temporary Charters, renewable every twenty years, as the Company grew wealthy, Parliament grew jealous, and insisted on enquiry preceding the issue of the Charters of 1833 and 1853. The Company's trade had been, naturally, in articles of value produced in the villages by the village craftsmen, but with the interference of Parliament a new factor arose. Already the exquisite arts and crafts of the villages had begun to diminish in productiveness and in beauty. The destruction of the Higher Education had removed the stimulus already mentioned (p 36), which had kept the village arts and crafts at a high level. But the hand-loom industry was still extraordinarily flourishing and produced textiles of wonderful beauty. These had furnished the great trading profits of the Company, being bought at a cheap price and sold at a high. The new factor was the competition of the power-machinery of Lancashire, fostered and protected by Parliamentary legislation. Indian calicoes were highly valued by Englishwomen, and it became necessary to exclude them, so as to force the English to buy native instead of foreign-produced cloth.



Hence, as already mentioned, the heavy protective duties imposed on the popular Indian cloths, and finally their exclusion by penal enactments. The next step, after Lancashire had captured the British market and, after supplying that, had surplus cloth on hand, was to invade the Indian market, and in order to compete with the Home-producers in India "on equal terms," the wonderful and unique experiment was invented of turning Protection upside down, by imposing a Cotton Excise Duty on the Home made cloth, woven in Indian mills, thus protecting the foreign goods against the Home-made. Already the pressure of the East India Company on the weavers was diminishing their old prosperity, and now the attempt was made to force agriculturalists to produce cotton suitable for machine work, and to increase the export of raw material, turning India into a plantation for foreign advantage, the raw material returning as yarn and cloth. The number of weavers diminished, and the number of agriculturalists increased.

The sequence of events is instructive. First, a duty on Indian goods imported into England, so as to lessen the Indian trade with England. Then, import of Indian cloths made penal, so as to kill it. Then, a duty imposed on *Indian-made goods in India*, so as to raise their price and enable Lancashire to compete with India, in India, on 'equal terms'. The whole thing would be like a comic opera, if it did not mean the misery imposed on India as its result. Moreover, power machinery in India, as well as in England, crushed the hand loom, except so far as the finer and more artistic products were concerned.

The creation of peasant proprietors under the raiyat-

wari system in Madras, and of peasant tenants, holding their lands from landlords in other Provinces—varying in detail but invariable in causing injustice to the tenant and consequent discontent—came in as products of English ideas, founded on the Feudal System, the English land tenure being its worst survival in free countries, and utterly at issue, in confining ownership of land to individuals, with the communal holding of land by its cultivators, existing from time immemorial in India. This consummated the economic ruin of India, as far as the agriculturalists were concerned. How terrible and how complete is that ruin, we have seen in the preceding chapter.

Even where land is communally held by the cultivators, Village Industries are vital, not only for the supply of necessary articles for use in every household, but also because some simple form of handicraft is needed by every agriculturalist, in order to occupy usefully and remuneratively his many slack times, when he is not wanted in his fields.

The need for such occupation has become the more pressing in India, because of the minute fractionisation of the land that follows on peasant proprietorship, unless checked by law. Professor Ganguli touches on this in his illuminative lecture. He says

Mr Thompson, in Bengal, finds the size of the agricultural holding to be about 2.215 acres per cultivator and according to the Census of 1921 the average comes to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  acres, and it must be remembered that these acres are very often divided into many fragments. Day by day the most disastrous consequences of this state of affairs on rural economy are making themselves felt. Knowing that for his livelihood he could not depend on such a small holding, the owner puts in very little effort to 'better farming,' and even if he did, its production could not have maintained his family

Thus in the absence of any organised rural industries chronic unemployment has become one of the striking characteristics of Indian rural life. The Census Superintendent of Bengal says: "It is largely the land system of the country that is responsible for the present conditions. In other countries where the holdings are comparatively large and the farmer can only manage with his own hands a fraction of what work there is to be done he employs hired laborers and engages as many as are required to do the work and no more. In Bengal the holdings have been so minutely subdivided that there is not enough work for the cultivators but on the other hand there is no other work to which they can turn hand. In the Panjab Mr. Calvert has recently shown that the work done by the average cultivator does not represent more than 150 days of full labor in twelve months. Space will not permit me to analyse the situation in any detail but it is clear that the time has come for decisive action. As the economic motive in Indian life is largely dominated by local customs and tradition the representatives of the people brought into existence by the Indian Reforms must realise that they cannot establish a twentieth century form of Government on fifth century socio-economic organisations."

But may not even this concerted twentieth century have something to learn from the socio-economic organisation of the despised fifth century? May not the starving masses of to-day envy the ancient cultivators of the soil who had plentiful means of existence? If the twentieth century presents as the results of its organisation starving masses and a few thousand millionaires may not the twenty-first century condemn it as barbarism?

In October and November 1913—in a course of lectures given by me in Madras to mark the beginning of an earnest concerted movement for the uplifting of India and to prepare the way for the Home Rule Movement commenced in January 1914 by the founding

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\* Published under the title *Wake up India* in the same year

of *The Commonweal*, a weekly journal—the fourth lecture was devoted to “Indian Industries as Related to Self-Government”. Some surprise was expressed by my Chairman, Dewan Bahadur M Adinarayana Iyer, at my finding a connexion between Village Industries and Self-Government. But the relation is a very real one, as I was able to shew in the course of the lecture.

It has been proved in many countries that the villages cannot be prosperous if the villagers are thrown entirely on the land. It was the destruction by England of the wool industry of Ireland and the consequent throwing of the villagers entirely on the land, which led to the terrible famine in Ireland, and the emigration which peopled the States of America with huge numbers of Irish-Americans, the bitter enemies of England, who had driven them from the land they loved.

Here, in India, villagers throng into the town factories to eke out their livelihood, returning home when required by their agricultural duties. It was in the villages that the precious materials were created, the export of which made her wealth for thousands of years. In every country this co-operation of Agriculture and Village Industries is necessary for the employment and the prosperity of the people. Go to Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Russia (before the Bolsheviki), these industries are found, and side by side with these are often found Co-operative Societies, Village Banks, and other helpful agencies.

#### **Necessity for Village Industries**

Village Industries have two special values. First, they provide for the inhabitants of the village the articles in daily use, the mending of broken ones, etc. This is the

use we mostly find in the lists of village officers and servants (see Report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons, Parliamentary Paper, 1812 [377] vii, 1 pp. 84, 85) The many lists differ very little We find after the Headman, the Accountant, the Watchman, the Boundary Man, the Superintendent of Tanks and Water-courses, the Priest, the Schoolmaster and the Astrologer, there follow the Smith, the Carpenter, the Potter, as well as the Washerman, the Barber, the Cowkeeper, and the Doctor These and others are mentioned And the higher authority in Kingdoms and Republics was enjoined to see that the craftsmen had proper materials and tools, and the agriculturalist good supplies of the necessary seed-grains On the importance of this, Mr A Ranganatham, M L C, writes

*In the old days, the village had its carpenter, blacksmith and people of similar avocations Their duty was to attend to the preparation and repair of the implements of the villagers to manufacture all the vessels they required, and things of that sort These people also had some lands given to them free of tenure or on favorable terms, and, like the other village officials were receiving some emoluments from the people of the village The Government have taken over the control of these service lands, with the result that these artisans grew very reluctant to discharge their duties to the people and the people, on the other side do not feel compelled to give them their share as they did in the old days, to give them their emoluments which were their due, so that a number of villages now have no artisans of their own, and the cultivators have to go to neighboring villages to get their tools made and implements repaired And the number of villages in this position is increasing, as I can testify from my own knowledge The result is that an unfortunate villager, who may have a plough needing repair, has to take it to a far off village to get it attended to instead of as hitherto, getting it attended to in his own village*

Similar complaints have been made to myself, and

poor men have told me of the difficulties they have to meet, it was easy to cultivate plots for the carpenter, the ironsmith, the weaver, in return the tools and the implements were kept in good order, cloths were supplied, so that both sides profited and and neither side suffered.

To return to the weaving

Mr Adinarayana Iyer, speaking as Chairman at the lecture above referred to, remarked, as to agriculture, that the strain on land has been increased by the wiping out, one after another, of the Indian industries under the stress of competition of outside machine made goods. All the men thrown out from their ancient handicrafts have crowded on to the land, taking up poorer and poorer soils for cultivation to eke out a subsistence.

The Madras Government has made vigorous efforts to help the dying class of village weavers, first by slight improvements in the hand-looms, and then by spreading Co operative Societies to aid both production and distribution. For the first object, it organised peripatetic Demonstration Parties to teach improved methods of weaving, by the introduction of the fly-shuttle, specially useful in weaving the coarser cloths worn by the peasantry. In Coimbatore District, 99 out of 100 villages manufacture coarse cloths (this was written in 1913, long before Mr Gandhi's charka campaign), and the use of the fly shuttle doubled the out turn. The weaving Institute at Salem did much to train the weavers in using these shuttles.

The second object has been carried out by the multiplication of Co operative agencies, supplying yarn to the weavers and helping in the distribution of the cloth produced. In the Bombay Presidency, Mr A F Maconochie, I C S, Collector at Sholapur, revived the

local weaving industry by the simple expedient of making arrangements to supply the weavers with raw materials on reasonable terms, advancing them cash at reasonable rates in the slack season and enabling them to obtain the best market price for their labor—all of which advantages are denied them by the rapacious village money-lender. In three years the conditions of three hundred weavers had greatly improved, twenty five of them had paid off all their old debts, and recovered their mortgaged property from the sowcars (money-lenders), and at the same time the scheme itself had given a fair dividend on the capital used ' 1

Professor Lees Smith, engaged by the Government of Bombay to lecture on Higher Commercial and Economical Subjects, made the following remarks on the bearing of Co-operative Banks on Self Government

"They could scarcely over-estimate the ultimate importance, not only to the economic but to the political life of this land, of a widespread system of Co-operative Agricultural Banks. Here they had the beginning of representative institutions. They would find that all political philosophers had insisted that in order that a people might secure the ability to work representative institutions, it was not enough merely to confer these institutions upon them. They must somehow or other supply the ordinary elector with continual opportunity for actual practice in the conduct of Self-Governing institutions. They would remember that Lord Morley, speaking of Local Government, pointed out that the great object of a widespread system of Local Govern-

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<sup>1</sup> *Artistic and Industrial Revival in India* by E. B. Havell quoted in *Wake up India*, p. 153. The latter book contains Social Reform Lectures on Foreign Travel, Child Marriage and Its Results, Our Duty to the Depressed Classes, Indian Industries as Related to Self Government, Mass Education, The Education of Indian Girls, The Color Bar in England, the Colonies and India, The Passing of the Caste System. It was the result of just twenty years of hard work in India for Religious, Educational, and Social Reform.

ment institutions was not so much efficiency of administration as of being a means of popular political education. The great test as to whether the people of a country were adapted to Self-Government was whether they, apart altogether from what the Government did, of their own inherent genius created Self-Governing institutions. What was the secret of the success of Self-Government in Great Britain? It was that the working-man who formed the British Democracy spent his time night after night, week after week, month after month, year in and year out, in taking part in the actual conduct of some great Self-Governing institutions—institutions which he had created for himself, such as *Co-operative Societies, Trade Unions, Friendly Societies, Working-men's Clubs*, etc. He wished therefore to impress upon them as strongly as he possibly could that the ultimate fate of these Co-operative Banks would mean much to the political future of the country. He was convinced that the training in Self-Government given by village Co-operative Societies would be much more real and important than that given by Self-Governing institutions given them by the Government. One of the great tests as to whether the Indian people were adapting themselves to the Self-Governing institutions for which England was now expecting them to prepare, would be the success with which they conducted village Self-Governing institutions." *Bulletin*, September, 1909

Another most valuable service done by Co-operative Societies is their reaction on the character of those concerned in their working. The following extracts are culled from *The Bulletin*, as noted

Mr W. R. Gourlay, ICS, Director of Agriculture



and Co-operative Credit Societies, Bengal, remarked on the character for honesty, common in Indian villages "The majority of cultivators within their own villages have a character for honest dealing among their neighbors, and it is this character for honesty which is the basis for all Co-operative credit" The villagers pledge their character as security for loans. *Bulletin*, September, 1909, pp 4, 5

' Raffeisen laid it down that whatever security a man offered, even if he were a millionaire, he should not be admitted to a Society unless he was a decent man So that to be a member of a Raffeisen Society was a testimony of thoroughly good character" Professor Lees Smith, *Bulletin*, December, 1909 p 51

' A village bank takes its place among the institutions of the village, and arouses universal interest It draws the best people of the village together, and creates a real sense of proprietorship It causes the man of bad character to reform, and the rent-defaulter to meet his engagements, in order that he may have the privilege of belonging to the Society *Bulletin*, December, 1909, p 46

"Experience has proved that a Co-operative Society, well formed and properly supervised, can be run by ordinary villagers with immense benefit to all concerned It can save the raiyat from the mahajan and give him a new outlook on life, it can make him thrifty, hard-working and self-reliant, it can improve agriculture, sanitation and education, it can heal factions and stop petty litigation it can make village life healthier in all its relations. All these results I have myself seen Of all the methods of attacking the agricultural problem,

not on one but on every side, Co-operation is incomparably the most promising. A net-work of Societies would immensely facilitate general administration, for the principle goes to the very root of the matter. The instinct of association is already deeply implanted in the people, and the Co operative movement which appeals primarily to this instinct has undoubtedly come to stay.' From *The Annual Report of Co operative Societies in Bihar and Orissa 1911-12* Given in *Bulletin*, December, 1912, p 109

If Village Industries are not only to supply the necessities for comfortable village life, but also to produce articles, as in the Past, for export and thus again become the great source of India's wealth it is necessary that Co operative agencies shall be available in every District, with Branches in every sub District and a small centre in every village. In the Commonwealth of India Bill provision is made—(see Schedule 3)—for the establishment of such agencies. The Village will have its Co operative Stores, wherein will be collected the results of Cottage Industries, with a Co operative Credit Bank, to advance the necessary capital to the artificers, to sell such of their productions as are needed by the villagers for their own use, and to transport them to the Talukâ Stores for wider distribution and for forwarding them through the District Collecting Centre, whereto Export Merchants could send their orders or their agents, the District Samiti would arrange the necessary co ordination of Talukâ and Village Stores, and its District Bank would issue the larger loans for sub division in Talukâ and Village areas. Already something has been done along these lines, despite the difficulties, and such an institution as the Madras Urban Central Bank, under careful business

management, has proved itself to be of the greatest value Mr E B Havell, just quoted, proceeds

If this can be done without any attempt to improve the methods and appliances of the weavers, it stands to reason that an efficient organisation which gives both financial and practical educational assistance would be certain of success. The example of ten thousand weavers in the Serampore District of Bengal is a proof that simple improved appliances can enable village weavers to double their earnings even without any outside assistance (Loc cit pp 179 180)

A very valuable publication entitled *The Madras Bulletin of Co operation*, was published for some years from 1909-1913, and perhaps before and after, and I found it very useful in writing some articles in *The Central Hindu College Magazine* on village education, with the inclusion of agriculture and industries

The question is What shall be taught in the village, and I urged that education should be much more practical, less book work, more intelligent contact with the objects round them the very simple elements common to all religions, morality by stories of Sages, Saints and Heroes, and by singing well chosen songs Train the children's bodies, for this nothing is better than the indigenous exercises and one or two team games, which teach co operation, discipline, and the working for a common end, with good temper, and courage and alertness. Reading, writing and arithmetic must be taught, if possible by the Montessori method The simple rules of sanitation and hygiene, and the reasons for them How to deal with petty accidents, how to bind up a cut, bandage a strain, deal with a burn, how to make a poultice, what to do immediately in case of a snake bite, a dog-bite, a scorpion sting, every boy and girl should learn these simple things As I wrote in 1913.

"One reason why the Scout Movement is so popular is because the Scout Movement teaches the boys these common things which they were never taught in the schools. They take out Scouts and lose them in the woods. How many of you, left in a wood, could find your way out? What can you do in the wood, if you have no food? What can you do in the wood, if you have no knowledge of the common herbs, the common berries and seeds, as to whether they are edible or poisonous? These are all things that should be taught by object lessons in the village school, so that when the boy at eight or nine is ready to go on to the technical school, he should go up with a whole mass of useful knowledge in his head and fingers, and not a mere lot of facts, that he begins to forget as soon as he turns to his ordinary work in life. Then, when he goes on to the elementary technical school, he ought to learn about all the birds of the place, and the insects of the place, which are useful and which are mischievous, what sort of snails you should put into water in order to prevent mosquitoes from breeding in it—I doubt very much if many of you know this. And yet there are some snails which poison the water, and there are others which help to keep the water pure. There are some weeds which, if you grow them in a pond, will prevent mosquitoes breeding there. You do not really need to have a travelling party of advisers, as they have here, to tell you what ought to be done. If you had been taught these commonplaces of ordinary knowledge at school, you would not be so much bothered now with the question of mosquitoes and fevers, with the doctors and their western scientific ways. Nature gives you the remedies for Nature's own difficulties, but you go along your path

with your eyes shut, and then you wonder that you become ill. These are some of the things I would teach in the village school, these common ordinary things. Then the children should be taught how to cook. Every boy and every girl ought to know simple cooking, enough to feed himself in time of difficulty. Every boy and girl ought to know how to light a fire. They give prizes among the Scouts for this, and the one who can light the fire with one match instead of two gets the prize. Why, you can make education a delight to the children, real fun, if you teach them rationally instead of irrationally. Most of the boys will learn agriculture from the older peasants, or weaving or other work. Part of the day should go on the lines given in the school, and part in apprenticeship with an elder.

"But some of your boys will go on to the secondary technical school. What are they to learn there? First a more scientific type of agriculture. They should learn under a skilled practical agriculturalist, how to carry on the work of agriculture, how to distinguish good and bad seeds from each other so that they may not be cheated if they have to buy seed. They should learn something about the various soils of their district so that they may know how to deal with particular kinds of soil. They should learn the advantages of deep digging as against shallow digging, and when only shallow ploughing is possible, what crops grow best on what soil, how to plant trees, and so on. In fact, in a village a child should have been given a little bit of a garden and a few seeds, he should have been shown how to plant them, how to water them, and when they get high enough, how to transplant them.

Some of the co-operators find that if you give the villager any sapling which is two or three feet high, he will take care of it and nurse it into a tree, and make a good part of his living out of it, but that it never strikes him to sow the seed and look after it as a seedling, so they sometimes give him the sapling and thus increase the number of trees, which are badly wanted in many of the villages. After the age of nine, the boys should be technically trained. Some may go and learn weaving, there are simple machines now for weaving, that any school boy could learn to run, but remember that an art is learnt better by apprenticeship than in a school. Teach your boys to use an improved machine, and then apprentice them to a practical weaver. They will teach their master the new form of machinery, and the weaver will teach them the traditional secrets of his art. Not only will you have weavers, but you will have carpenters, potters, and blacksmiths to train, all these to learn their practical lessons from the older workmen. In that way you utilise the craftsmen as the teachers of these boy-apprentices."

It is vitally important that the schools, to which village boys and girls go to become literate, should be linked up with the manual training needed for the carrying on of the village life, and that each successive grade of school on the literary side should be accompanied with a parallel grade of craft development, whether for the craftsman or for the scientist. Japan, with the intense practical ability which characterises it, has begun its agricultural education in the primary schools, and in the higher primary natural science is taught. Lessons on plants and animals are attached to agriculture, horti-

culture and local industries. In the secondary schools chemistry and physics are taught with plant diseases, and "pests affecting the crops, then a four years course in the normal schools is completed in" a full year of special agricultural work in the College at Tokio. Experimental and demonstration farms complete the training. In the Commonwealth of India Bill the necessary framework for such training is provided in the Village, the Taluka and the District. I have already mentioned the powers and functions assigned to the Self-Governing body elected by the inhabitants of each area, and the Co-operative Societies for production and distribution of articles made in the villages for Home use and foreign export.

The English Bureaucracy has not favored such developments, except to a limited extent when carried on by their own agents under strict Government control. *The Bulletin*, before mentioned, stated that in 1908 there were 1201 village banks with a membership of 93,200, and 149 urban banks on Co-operative lines, with 55,000 members. During the following year the banks increased to 2,008 and the membership had increased to 184,897. (The figures are taken from *The Bulletin* for June, 1910, pp 135, 136.)

Mr M. R. Sundara Aiyar, under the auspices of the Indian Guild of Science and Technology, gave a very valuable lecture on Indian Crafts, reported in the *Allahabad Leader* of October 26, 1913. I summarised part of it at the time, as follows:

The lecturer described in detail the political and economic aspects of Municipal administration which these Guilds carried on. The maintenance of roads and public works, the police duties, the relief of poverty, free education, sanitation,

etc., were all undertaken by these organisations. The lecturer then described the regulation of wages, the collection of rates and taxes, and the system of local finance with which these local bodies were able to carry on the administration, without much help from the Imperial Government.

Mr Sundara Aiyar pointed out that these Guilds worked hand in hand with the Government of the country, and contrasted them with the Guilds of Mediæval Europe, where they were oppressed and plundered. The Indian Guilds, he said, "often served as Municipal Councils, and in large centres the headman of each Guild was represented in the Council, so that they linked with Government here, instead of being in opposition as they were in Europe." The lecturer desired the revival of these Guilds, and their development, "in two directions. Firstly, in developing the present Municipal organisation of the country, which would maintain its Branch Railways, minor irrigation works, institutions for primary education and for the relief of the poor, and so on, and the other, in the direction of productive and distributive, co-operative and profit sharing industrial associations, which would organise capital and labor efficiently for the welfare of the country."

Probably the study of Co operative institutions in Denmark would be very instructive and would prove useful here, for it has there been largely used in connection with agriculture.

But none of these things will save India from death, unless they are carried out under her own control, and after she has established a Home Government. The Bureaucracy looks askance at all efforts which are initiated and carried on outside its own control. It fears the reaction of such efforts on the desire for Freedom, and



is jealous of attempts to build up undertakings, unless they are developed under ' the eye and hand of the local officials". The genius of the West has tended to centralisation, to control by a central authority and its agents. The genius of India has been the building up of small units of Government, left to develop freely along their own lines

And there is no better training for True Democracy, than the little "Village Republics," which were the foundation of her liberty and the source of her wealth. With their revival will return the old liberty and her millennial prosperity, in which the memory of the present starvation and the present bondage will be as a nightmare from which the sleeper awakes, to find his room flooded with the beams of the rising sun, and to hear the music of the birds as they welcome the new-born day

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE REMEDY IS SELF-RULE

#### *The Real Democracy of the East*

The remedy for the poverty of the masses of the people lies in the restoration of their old system of Self-Government, and in giving them power over their own concerns. If a people are to be free, and to feel the value of their freedom, it must enter into their own lives, improve and beautify them. De Toqueville, it will be remembered, gave to the self-ruled "Townships" of the American Colonies the credit for training their citizens in the habit of Self-Government, and regarded the existence of these as a guarantee for the safety of their freedom when it was won. Self-Government in the Village; in the groups of villages—the Talukâ; the aggregation of these into larger areas—the District; the grouping of the Districts into Provinces; of the Provinces into a Realm, call it by what name you choose, seems to me to be the only real and satisfactory form of Democracy. The West has given a suffrage which sends men to decide Imperial questions, on which they have formed no opinions themselves, because they hope these will benefit some local business. And that absurdity is called the Government of the people by the people.

In dealing with "Indian Industries as Related to Self-Government,"<sup>1</sup> in Chapter III, I left over their relation to Self-Government, to be dealt with in the present chapter, and stated the question as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> *Wake up, India* pp. 108—159.

"I put to you first a general proposition, that competent, effective, Self Government, can only be carried on over an area where the people who compose the governing body understand the questions with which they have to deal That might seem axiomatic, it is by no means axiomatic in modern systems of Government, for the objection that some of us have to what in the West is called Democracy is that the people who govern know practically nothing, for the most part, about the questions as to which they have to elect their representatives, that they elect a man for some local advantage, and then that he has power to vote on matters unconnected with the locality, and that the great danger of what is called Democracy to-day is that you count heads in your governors, and you do not weigh the contents of the heads, as is necessary for rational Government, that you do not demand that men shall understand a question before they vote upon it, you bid them vote out of the plenitude of their ignorance, instead of out of the plenitude of their knowledge You count so many thousands of people as voters, but you give to the learned man just the same power that you give to the laborer in the field And yet we learnt in our school-days that if you took a nought to begin with, and multiplied it by any figure, however large, you get but a nought in the end I sometimes want to apply that to modern Democracy, and when I find a mass of very ignorant people, and see that the first man knows nothing at all, I remark that nothing, multiplied by a hundred thousand, means nothing at the end of the multiplication as it did at the beginning So I submit that the ancient system prevalent here dealt with things in a much more practical way, a way which made Self-

Government at once effective, competent and real "In a village, every one had a share in the Village Government through the Panchâyat elected by the people, and they knew the questions that had to be decided by it and were competent to weigh the value of their representatives. A certain number of Villages together, say, ten, made up the next area, with a Government again for these ten villages, they, in their turn, were a Self-Governing unit, with larger power, with wider knowledge. You go up to a hundred villages, and thus you obtain a larger area, and in each case you find that the Council of the higher one is elected by the Councils of the others. You have exactly the same system in ancient India that you have to day in modern Japan, which is making progress on every side. You have in Japan to day the Village with its own Council, then the Talukâ, where there is a Council elected by the Councils of every village in the Talukâ. Then you have the Talukâs gathered together into a District, and the Taluka representatives elect the Council of the District. Those, again, elect the General Council, which manages the common affairs of the whole of a larger area." And it is that principle of building up from the Village Unit which, I submit to you, would lead to the best form of Self-Government. You have already the Village, you have already the Talukâs, you have already the District Board and the Municipality—the District Board for the country, the Municipality for the town. Those are ready to your hands, and ought to be linked up, as they are not linked up now, so that you should gradually bring the whole together, as you did in ancient India, as they are doing in modern Japan. And then you have to create three more bodies, probably a Province with its own local Parliament, overseeing the whole

of the affairs of the Province, while not interfering with the self-governing control of smaller areas, in so far as they are not affecting the larger area of the Province. Then above the Province, the National Parliament, where you would have far more restricted suffrage in the electoral body, because the questions to be decided need more knowledge, and only those who know are able to vote intelligently, and then above that, elected by the National Parliament, the representatives of India as a Self-Governing Community within the Empire, sending her children to the Imperial Council, where every constituent part of the Empire should also have its representatives, gathered round the King himself, to deal with international affairs, the most delicate, the most difficult of all. In this way, no man would be without a share in the governing, but his knowledge would limit the area over which his share of the governing consisted, and you would have in modern days a reproduction, with many improvements, of the old sound system in India, which made her so strong, so wealthy, in the elder days. You would have a true democratic Government by the people, but each area would elect its representatives, the electoral roll being determined according to the grade of knowledge demanded. You would bind these increasing areas together into one great scheme of Government, and you would have learned how to solve the problems of Democracy on the one side, of Autocracy on the other, by letting a man's power be proportionate to his knowledge, while, on the other hand, there would be no barrier anywhere to the rising of the competent. A man born in the village might first go to his Village Panchâyat, then if he proved himself effective, if his character were noble, his education good,

he might be sent from his village to represent it in the next Talukâ Council. If there he still showed great ability, from there he might go on to the District Board or the Municipal Council, as the case might be, from there again to the Provincial from that to the National Parliament, and finally, if he had the requisite strength and knowledge, to the Imperial Council of the Empire. That is how Joseph Chamberlain made his way in England right up to the Cabinet of Great Britain. He began by being trained in his own town of Birmingham. He worked there as a Municipal Councillor, he learnt his duties in the smaller area of his native town, and when he won the confidence of his townspeople, when they found him able, effective, honest and capable, then, and not till then, did they send him to represent them in the Council of the Nation, to use in a wider sphere the powers he had perfected in the smaller. (*Loc cit* pp 120-124)

The only matter to which I take objection in the above is the successive elections of each Council by the members of the Council below. Further studying the question from 1913 onwards I came to the conclusion that the electorates were far too narrow, and while holding to the principle that knowledge and power should, as far as possible walk hand in hand, I have suggested that the individual in the village, where every adult, not definitely disqualified by crime, insanity or bankruptcy, possessed the franchise, he should also be able to reach the next higher franchise not only by the narrow lane of the Village Council, but also on the broad ground, that he had made himself more than an illiterate, unskilled, incompetent person by a

broad road entered by gates through any one of which he might pass. As education spreads, as he becomes skilful in his trade or other occupation, he should rise automatically on the ladder of power. On this, I shall say something more presently.

We shall also see later on that the building up of areas of Government from the Village to the Talukâ (or Sub-District) and from the Talukâ to the District, each with its own elected Council, gives practically that 'Government of the people by the people' which the West talks of but never created. That was the old Indian way, and it is the way which is revived in the Commonwealth of India Bill, drafted by representative Indians, and to be presented to the British Parliament for sanction only.

It may be well to interpolate here a paragraph on my own use of the word "Politics," as it is generally restricted to questions concerning the Government of the country, instead of its being used in the old Greek and Latin sense, of including the whole welfare of the State, *i.e.* of the country as an organism, discharging the functions on which its life depends and not a collection of persons struggling with each other for their individual profit, kept within certain bounds by laws, the authority of which they recognise, but really in the state of social and economic anarchy, called Competition. I have been fond of making four divisions of Politics. Individual Politics, the training of the good citizen, the man fit to live in a City—that is, in close association with his fellows—honorable, upright, with public spirit, ready to bear his part of the burden of the community and National life, with a social conscience, a sense of public duty. In

the Athenian State, men were elected by their fellow-citizens to public offices, and they could not refuse to fill them. A trace of a similar spirit is found in Switzerland to-day, where a man who neglects the casting of his vote in an election is fined for the disregard of a public duty.

A correlative value of the Co-operation movement—dealt with in the last chapter in relation to Agricultural and Village Industries—is in its bearing on the training of individual character. From the issue of the *Madras Bulletin* for December, 1912, I took a case of its growth and its affect on character, in my lecture,

in order to show you what kind of instrument it is which is now within your power for the helping of your country. For I find it there stated—I am taking page 87—which deals with the particular growth of the Co-operative Credit Societies in the Presidency—there were then 910 institutions of the rural Credit Societies with unlimited liability, modelled on the Raiffeisen method and six with limited liability. There were also 34 urban Societies on the Luzzati model, and 13 others. Remember that this is only a very young movement, started practically by the Act of 1904 which enabled the work to be done, yet in 1912, the deposits in the hands of the Madras Central Urban Bank from these various Societies amounted to no less than Rs 24,43,370 and Rs 1,00,350 of share capital, showing how enormously the movement had spread even in five years. Surely, where you see that this is going on, and know that it is working not only for increase of material prosperity, as I may say, but for the building of character, for the gradual growth of capacity in those who take part in it, surely, it might be well to extend it in some other directions, in which it might prove to be of the greatest service in the country.

Then comes Municipal Politics, the grades of the Sub-Provincial Units of Government, the Village, the Taluka, the District—rural and urban. These are the best training ground—as just illustrated in the case of the late Joseph Chamberlain—for National Politics. The silly proposals often made about taking over, without preparation, the



management of the affairs of a Nation, shew a mind utterly unversed in any form of corporate management. Members of great Trade Unions, for instance, are capable of dealing with Provincial or National affairs, because they have learnt not only the theory of, but possess experience in, administering the affairs of a huge body of men, to whom they are responsible. It is because I recognise this that—to quote from *Wake Up, India*, again—“it seems to me that our Village Unit is the root of what I have called Municipal Politics, that it is there that you must train your citizen for the larger work outside. I know that you find among well educated men large numbers in India who are showing public spirit, self-sacrifice for the sake of the Nation, but they are practically a few elect souls who, stimulated by education, by their knowledge of their history, by their love for their country and the people of the country, have managed under most unfavorable conditions to develop a very noble public spirit and a splendid patriotism. I have very often pointed out that there is no good work which is done in this country where self-sacrifice is wanted, that you do not find your Vakil population in the front leading people on by their example to self-sacrifice, and devoting themselves to patriotic work. Why, if you go over, in Madras, the names of the men who are the real public workers, you find the majority comes from your Vakil community. It is they who give themselves to the work of the public, because they have realised through education and through the development of character, that it is only where self-sacrifice and labor for the public good are given without reward, it is only there that you will find the possibility of the making of a Nation. And if I wanted to particularise at

all, I might mention the public work which is being constantly done by my late learned opponent in the High Court, for you find him a leader in all forms of public work in Madras, busy as he is with ordinary legal undertakings. There is our hope—in the younger men. I do not want to be in any way forgetful of the services of the elder. But I do see in the younger generation, not only here, but in England and in other countries as well, I see in the Youth—from the ages perhaps of about eighteen to five-and-thirty—I see a passion for devotion to public work and the country's interest which is new to me, coming at the end of a long life of experience in public labor. And when I see that showing itself here among the public workers, I feel that the day of India's redemption is not so far off as some of us had feared." (*Loc cit* pp 125, 126)

How gloriously the Hope then expressed as to Youth, twelve years ago, has been realised in Europe, in India, and in America, all the world can see

The third stage of Politics is National Politics, and this includes the range of work in the Provinces and in the whole country, it is that which needs most study, far-sighted wisdom, and an insight into the many contacts which occur, unseen by a superficial view, between the varied interests of class and of Nation, reminding one of the curious relations, found by biologists to occur between apparently unrelated animals and the consequent effect on the evolution of the vegetable kingdom. I used to add to these International Politics, to be dealt with by some body, a real "Privy Council," to be composed of representatives from all the territories within the Commonwealth, but the Self-Governing Dominions shew so

strong an opposition to the formation of any such Council that I suppose it must be left out of consideration at present

It will be seen that, from this point of view, "Politics" covers the whole field of National, and even International welfare, and it is in this sense that, personally, I constantly use it

### **Bryce on Democracy**

It is worth while to study the following, borrowed from Bryce's standard work on Democracy

Let us see what help a consideration of these facts can afford to those who seek to create some kind of free Self Government in peoples hitherto without it Nature must be the guide, for it is by following or imitating the natural process whereby the peoples now free obtained their freedom that the people hitherto unfree can hope to advance most steadily

History the record of these processes, suggests that one of the first things to be done is to secure for every man the primary right of protection against arbitrary power His life, his personal safety, his property, must be secured, the imposts laid on him must not be excessive nor arbitrary When co operation in the work of protecting and managing the affairs of the community is being organised, every actually existing kind of Local Self Government, however small its range ought to be turned to account Every social or economic grouping every bond which gathers men into a community helps to form the habit of joint action, and that sense of a duty to others which is the primal bond of civic life If any existing local or social unit is fit to be turned into an organ of Local Self Government, it ought to be so used If there is none such, then such an organ must be created and entrusted with some control of those matters in which a neighborhood has a common interest.

Small areas are better than large areas, because in the former men can know one another, learn to trust one another reach a sound judgment on the affairs that directly concern them, fix responsibility and enforce it Even family jealousies and religious enmities may subside when the questions touch the pecuniary interests of the

neighborhood The older rural Cantons of Switzerland show what Self Government in a small community can do for forming political aptitude, and the same lesson is taught by the tithings and hundreds of early England and by the Towns of early Massachusetts and Connecticut The examples of these three countries suggest the value of primary meetings of the people in these small areas The Folk Moot of Old England, the Town Meeting of New England, the Thing of the Norsemen were the beginning of freedom

Political institutions ought to be framed with careful regard to social conditions, for much depends on the relations of the more educated class with the masses, and the influence they can exert on the choice of representatives<sup>1</sup> The people must have due means for choosing as leaders, be they officials or representatives, those they can trust, but if these posts go by free popular choice to the "natural leaders" in any community, small or large, so much the better, for they have more of a character to lose than has the average man Leaders who have their own aims to serve may misrepresent mass sentiment, or may call for Self Government only because they desire to make their own profit out of it The more ignorant and inexperienced is the multitude, so much the more will power fall to a few, and the main aim must be to see that the latter are prevented from abusing it for personal or class purposes, and turning an attempted democracy into a selfish oligarchy

Moreover—and this is practically the decisive fact—there is a logic of events In India or Egypt or the Philippines for instance, when a Government has, directly or implicitly, raised expectations and awakened impatience, misgivings as to the fitness to receive a gift may have to yield to the demand for it There are countries in which, seeing that the break up of an old system of Government and an old set of beliefs threatens the approach of chaos, an effort must be made to find some institutions, however crude, which will hold society together There are moments when it is safer to go forward than to stand still, wiser to confer institutions, even if they are liable to be misused, than to foment discontent by withholding them

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<sup>1</sup>The "Intelligentsia" in Russia, the "Cientificos" in Mexico, were too few to exert this influence Even apart from their other deficiencies, there were not enough of them to form a public opinion, enabling them to hold their ground without an armed force

At such a moment India stands to day What will Britain do ?

There are two points not mentioned so far in the condition of the Indian Villages that I will give here in the words of Mr Ranganatham one as to the Police in the villages and the second as to the difficulty of obtaining justice It must be remembered that the watchmen were in the lists of Village servants, and they also have become village tyrants rather than servants They were once dependent on the villagers, they were obliged to do their duty, or there was no pay. A Government Report, quoted by Mr Ranganatham, says

His duties are to keep watch at night, to find out all arrivals and departures observe all strangers and report all suspicious persons to the village headman He is likewise bound to know the character of each man in the village and in the event of a theft committed in the village bounds it is his duty to detect the thief He is enabled to do this by his early habits of inquisitiveness and observation as well as by the nature of his allowances which being partly a small share of the grain and similar property belonging to each house he is always kept on the watch to ascertain his fees and always in motion to collect them When a theft or robbery happens the watchman commences his enquiries and researches it is very common for him to track a thief by his footsteps and if he does this to another village so as to satisfy the watchman there his responsibility ends and it is the duty of the watchman of the new village to take up the pursuit The last village to which the thief has been clearly traced becomes answerable for the property stolen which would otherwise fall on the village where the robbery was committed The watchman is obliged to make good this amount so far as his means go and the remainder is levied on his village

A last quotation from Mr Ranganatham shows how difficult it is to get justice under the present system.

The people suffer also in regard to the Administration of Justice When referring to the Village Headmen I stated that they as a rule combined in themselves the offices of

Magistrate and of Civil Judge But it is one thing to give them the power to try cases and another to create sufficient trust in their integrity and impartiality among the people so that they may freely utilise the services of the Headmen to dispose of their petty Civil and Criminal cases Enough has been said to show how the short-sighted changes introduced by the British brought about diversity of interests and lack of goodwill between the villagers and their local officers, with the consequence that the gulf between them has been widening so far that the common folk have come to regard the village officials as the irresponsible representatives of an unsympathetic bureaucracy and think it futile to expect fair play and justice at their hands So people requiring judicial redress now go long distances to file their cases before the regular tribunals and are obliged to be constantly away from their villages to be present during the enquiry of their cases This means not only great dislocation of work at home and loss of income for the days they are absent from the village, but, in addition, considerable expense and inconvenience to all concerned in the cases

It is comparatively in a few classes of cases only that Courts in India are permitted the help of jurors or assessors. The trying Magistrate or Judge has generally no local knowledge of the conditions and the habits of the people who appear before him As the enquiry takes place as a rule far away from the place of offence or the cause of action, there is not available, at the place of enquiry, that public opinion which, being acquainted with the facts of the case, can immediately and effectively check any tendencies towards exaggeration or prevarication on the part of parties or witnesses to a case In the old days, the old village Panchâyat would deal with the civil and criminal cases of comparatively less serious character, and dispose of them in their own village Instead of that they now have to go long distances in order to have their cases heard You will understand the inconvenience that is caused to the people especially when I tell you that in Madras there is one Criminal Court for every 55 villages or 150 square miles, and one Civil Court for every 212 villages or 575 square miles Think of all the trouble the people are now put to obtain justice Justice, if it is to be worth anything at all, should be cheap and prompt, instead of which it is extremely costly and doubtful whether it is obtainable at all The truth can be known only in the villages and not by people living far away, who have no knowledge of the habits or veracity of the people

they are dealing with. In my own experience, I have had to deal with such cases when acting as a Government Officer. On one occasion, I had a man come to me with a complaint. I asked him to state his case, and in the end he alleged that his house had been broken into and some jewels and other things stolen. I felt there was something wrong, and still I did not know how I could, on the mere statement of the man, come to the conclusion that his story was not true. Some time after, without telling anybody, I went to the man's village, and, in the presence of the villagers there asked him what he had to say, and I was surprised when the man bluntly said that his complaint was not true. Do you think that this man was suddenly filled with remorse and wanted to tell the truth? No. But he knew that it was no use, and would be unwise, to give his testimony in the village, where I had the means of checking myself his statement, whereas I had it not before. He knew he would be contradicted by the people there, if he made any untrue statements. I was thus able to give justice to the other man, better than if I had dealt with the case a long way off. That is one of the defects of the present method of administering Justice.

To the question, "What should be done?" our answer is: Restore the Panchâyat, and place in its hands the affairs of the village, with real power and effective autonomy, as it was described by Sir Charles Metcalfe in 1830.

The Village Communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down, revolution succeeds revolution, but the Village Community remains the same. The union of Village Communities, each one forming a separate little State in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence.

Let us then consider how this necessary reform may be speedily brought about.

### **The Revival of the Panchayat**

Under this title, I gave the second of the three lectures on the Village, mentioned already, that were delivered in London by Mr A Ranganatham, M L O, and myself, in 1924 And I want to put here some of the authorities on which I rely in pressing the restoration of the Sub-Provincial Units of Government to the place of power and dignity they held for ages in India. My thesis is The possibility of the restoration of these Sub-Provincial Units of Government to be effective in reality lies in the rebuilding of the Panchayat, the Sabhâ, (Talukâ or Tahsil) and the Samiti (Zillâ, District), properly interlinked and correlated

The Decentralisation Committee, appointed in 1907 by King Edward VII, though consisting of five Englishmen and only one Indian—Romesh Chandra Dutt—says :

Throughout the greater part of India the Village constitutes the primary territorial unit of Government organisation, and from the villages are built up larger administrative entities (Part III, Chap XVIII, § 694)

#### **These Villages**

formerly possessed a large degree of local autonomy This autonomy has now disappeared, owing to the establishment of local Civil and Criminal Courts, the present Revenue and Police organisation, the increase of communication, the growth of individualism and the operation of the individual raiyatwari system, which is extending even in the north of India Nevertheless, the Village remains the first unit of administration, the principal Village functionaries—the headman, the accountant and the village watchman—are largely utilised and paid by Government and there is still a certain amount of common Village feeling and interests

“ Paid by Government,” instead of appointed by the Village There lies the secret of the ruin The Village servants were made responsible to and were paid by an ascending scale of Government officials . Sub-Tahsildar,



Tahsildar, Deputy Collector, Collector The *Report* continues -

We consider that as *Local Self Government* should commence in the Villages with the establishment of Village Pan châyats, so the next step should be the constitution of Boards for areas of smaller size than a District We desire, therefore to see Sub District Boards universally established, as the principal agencies of Rural Board Associations (§ 736)

But all "completely under the eye and hand of the District authorities" No real freedom, and therefore no interest

In 1917, I asked

It is admitted that the Village Communities have disintegrated under British administration, but the *Report* urges their re establishment It seems that some witness doubted "whether the people are sufficiently advanced in education and independence for any measure of village autonomy", there speaks the spirit of the bureaucrat The Villages had been autonomous for thousands of years, invasions, changes of rule lapse of time had left them active, a century and a half of British Rule had made them unfit in this witness' mind, to manage their own affairs Why this strange deterioration under a rule supposed to be uplifting? Because, on the Procrustes bed of Bureaucracy, all that did not fit it had to be chopped off, the villagers had their own ways, which had served them well, but they were not the Collector's ways so they were bad Only Home Rule will reintegrate Village Government

And in 1924, I reiterated, and in 1925 I repeat the same plea for the reintegration of Village Government by villagers On this, hear Swami Vivekânanda

Children of India, I am here to speak to you to day about some practical things and my object in reminding you about the glories of the Past is simply this Many times have I been told that looking into the Past only degenerates and leads to nothing, and that we should look to the future That is true But out of the past is built the future Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains that are behind, and after that look forward, march forward, and make India brighter, greater, much higher than she ever was

Our ancestors were great. We must recall that. We must learn the elements of our being, the blood that courses in our veins, we must have faith in that blood, and what it did in the Past, and out of that faith, and consciousness of past greatness, we must build an India yet greater than what she has been.

Gradually the Panchâyat must renew the Village gaieties of the past. If I may quote myself again

The Village would become articulate through its Panchâyat, and would no longer be the dumb and often driven creature which it is to day. And it would be brought into touch with the larger life. The Panchâyat might invite lecturers, organise discussions, arrange amusements, games, etc. All Village life would be lifted to a higher level, widened and enriched by such organisation, and each Village, further, forming one of a group of villages would realise its unity with others, and thus become an organ of the larger corporate life.

Let us remember the music and the dancing, the drums and the pipes, the singing, before spoken of. Even now many a village has its tom-tom and its flute, its singing Bhajana party, and how the villagers enjoy these. Moreover they have village sports, wrestling, staff play and the like, while the girls have what in England would be called may-pole dances.

The present system is destroying India's life. Remember the words of Gopal Krishna Gokhale on the stunting of the Indian Race. (See p 29.)

The Panchâyat is being revived here and there, and the NATIONAL CONVENTION founds on it its Commonwealth of India Bill.

It has been seen above that Lord Bryce pointed out that where there were small units of Government they should be utilised for the training of the Nation in Self-Government on a larger scale, and any Nation governing the land which was not its own birth-place, if seriously

desirous of helping another to Self-Government, would surely utilise the age-long system in India of successive areas of Government, justified by its stability in India. Each village governed itself, but was also one of a group of ten villages, with a similar Government, ten of such groups, 100 villages, formed another unit of Government, 1000 villages, and so on. The arrangements needed for the larger group may be read in Manu's *Institutes*, and elsewhere. Such groups become States ruled by a Council, or by a King with his Ministers. Had the East India Company established itself in India from any of the high motives of Guardianship, Trusteeship and the like, discovered in recent times to justify the British Government in holding India as a Dependency—to the great enrichment of England and the impoverishment of India—it would have utilised the democratic elements of Government which it found here, but, to do it justice, it did not add hypocrisy to its usurpations. It frankly sought wealth, it annexed and plundered for the benefit of its trade. It was out for gain, not for philanthropy. Its policy, therefore, gave India ignorance for education, poverty for wealth, enslavement for liberty, but, at least, it never pretended to be a benevolent Trustee, remaining in India for the benefit of its Ward. It sometimes sent a portion of its loot to the City Churches in London.

When the Crown took over the country, an effort was made to undo some of the mischief brought about by the misrule of the Company, and with good intentions, but with much ignorance, it sought to plant in India a copy of its own institutions in Local Government. As I have said elsewhere, commenting on the view taken by

Lord Ronaldshay, ex-Governor of Bengal, in his *India . A Bird's Eye View*, on the habit of the Englishman of importing his own institutions into other lands:

He makes some remarks, which are a little biting, as to the way in which the Englishman insists on putting his own particular institutions in force in any country in which he has authority. It seems that Emerson—I had not remembered this myself—remarked upon this peculiarity, and said that "the Englishman sticks to his traditions and usages, and, so help him God, he will force his Island bye laws down the throat of great countries like India, China, Canada, Australia" (p 125). Lord Ronaldshay agrees with that view, and thinks the policy is an extraordinarily mistaken one, for he says "It must be admitted that, in deciding upon the type of local authority to be established in India, the authorities of the day went a long way towards justifying that somewhat caustic criticism" (p 126). He then deals with the way followed in England, and in India, therefore, the British think that "the inhabitants of the towns should likewise elect representatives to construct, maintain, and light their streets, provide and maintain their municipal buildings," look after the public health and so on, and he says "The result was not altogether happy, and a people, with a less robust belief in the excellence of their own institutions, might indeed have found cause for discouragement at the manner in which the useful, if somewhat unambitious, sphere of municipal administration at any rate, the great principle of 'Government by the people and for the people' was given application" (*Ibid*). He quotes the remark that the "existing institutions are, to a considerable degree, alien from the spirit of the people" (p 131).

On the other hand, Lord Ronaldshay bears witness to the success of an experiment in Bengal of the Village Panchâyat based on the old model.

The following remarks of Lord Ronaldshay are valuable, as he has grasped the Indian difficulty and its remedy :

That India evolved many centuries ago a highly developed system of Local Self-Government is undoubted, that it differed in kind from the system which we have imported into India from the West is equally certain. Corporate life in

ancient India took the form of guilds, notably of crafts guilds and merchant guilds. Such organisations came into being spontaneously, and themselves evolved the laws by which their activities were governed. Such laws, according to the ancient law books of the country, commanded recognition at the hands of the King (i.e., the Central Government), who was further charged with the duty of seeing that they were respected. That 'cultivators, traders, herdsmen, money lenders, and artisans have authority to lay down laws for their respective classes,' is asserted by Gautama some centuries B.C., and that 'the King must discipline and establish again on the path of duty all such as have erred from their own laws, whether families, castes, guilds, associations, or people of certain districts' is emphasised by Yajñavalkya. These bodies, therefore, were independent of the Central Government, they were not its offspring, nor were their functions the product of devolution, as in the case of such bodies as the Borough and County Councils of Great Britain. On the contrary, they were social organisations with authority which was not derived from, but which compelled the recognition of, the Central Government. Side by side with or out of these early guilds came into being village assemblies modelled on similar lines and possessing an equivalent status, which seem to have exercised judicial and municipal powers, and to have administered endowments for secular and religious purposes (pp. 132, 133).

I am not prepared to commit myself to the idea that the Village Government originated from craft guilds and the like, because it is shown historically to have consisted of *families* who settled down together, and the family rather than the craft idea dominates. But in every clan of families there were families pursuing different crafts, and we find that a rule prevailed that wrong-doers should be tried by men of their own craft, practically by a jury of the wrong-doer's peers. Also, in large villages, each craft had its "cheri," or site for the houses of the craftsmen.

Lord Ronaldshay further remarks

I have devoted some space to a consideration of the system of administration in force in Ancient India because

of the obvious bearing which it has upon the question which I have been discussing, namely, the unsuitability of the particular type of Local Self Government which we have instituted to the genius of the Indian people. It is, I think, a not unreasonable deduction from the knowledge which we now possess of theory and practice of Government in Ancient India that if, instead of creating Municipal and District Boards of the Western type, we had begun by recreating the village organisations which were congenial to the people Local Self Government would have made more satisfactory progress than has actually been the case. The steps which have been taken in various parts of India in recent years to establish Village Self Governing bodies have been handicapped by the prior existence of District and Local Boards. Instead of being the foundation of the whole edifice, they have had to be tacked on to the already existing institutions and difficulty has, consequently, been experienced in fitting them into the general scheme (pp 139, 140)

It was not until 1919 that a special Act known as the Bengal Village Self Government Act was passed with the object of placing Union Boards as far as possible upon a sound statutory basis, and of providing for the creation of Village Courts and Benches. This salutary return in the direction of the ancient indigenous system is breathing new life into Local Self Government. Let me conduct the reader to a Bengal Village the scene of the activities of a newly founded Union Board (p 189),

Lord Ronaldshay then gives a very interesting account of a visit he paid to East Bengal, where a Panchayât was working, under the alien name of a Union Board. He writes

To such a village in the Dacca District I came, not long after the passing of the Village Self Government Act of 1919, to meet the members of the Union Board, and was conducted to a pandal erected in a small open space, the counterpart of the English village green. All round the pandal in perspiring groups stood the sparsely clad population of the village interested spectators of what was going forward. In front of me in the centre of the pandal stood a table, on which were placed the books of the Union Board, and round me were seated the members of the Board bearded and reverend seigneurs, men who carried the confidence of their fellow villagers.

A small tax known as the *Chaukidari Tax* for the upkeep of the village police is a compulsory levy, but under the Village Self Government Act, a Union Board may impose additional taxation to enable it to undertake various works for the benefit of the villages. I was shown the accounts. The Board, though of recent creation, had imposed additional taxation amounting to a quarter of the *Chaukidari Tax*. Did the villagers object? I asked. At first, yes, but it was explained that the Board wanted the money for the construction of certain wells. Now, above all things, the villagers wanted wells, for a supply of good drinking water was a long felt want. They would see what the Board could do. The Board, it seemed, did very well, and during the coming year the rate of taxation was to be doubled for further improvements. Presently I saw the wells, excellent circular shafts lined with brick, some feet in diameter and with a neat coping round the top. The cost had been Rs 300—£20—per well, and neither the District Board nor any other agency, I was told, could construct such wells for less than double the sum, for the village had done the work itself, the Chairman of the Board had kept the accounts and done all the clerical work, a member of the Board had supervised construction, the labor had come from the village itself. There had been, in fact, no middleman charges, and the village had got the full value of every rupee spent. The year before, twenty five of the Boards in the District had raised no revenue by taxation other than that of the *Chaukidari Tax*, this year all but fourteen of the one hundred and thirty Union Boards which had been established within the area had levied additional rates (pp 144—146) . . .

The trial of petty criminal cases and civil suits was a function of the guilds of ancient India, and the experimental establishment of Village Courts and Benches under the Act of 1919 met with immediate success. In the year 1921, 652 criminal cases and 2,218 civil suits were instituted before fourteen such Courts and Benches, a single village Court disposing of 260 civil suits and 66 criminal cases.

It would seem, therefore, that the village is still the fundamental unit in the communal life of India, and it is worth noting in passing, as significant of the feelings of the village population that at a recent Conference of representatives of Union Boards in the Dacca District, a proposal was put forward for discussion for the abolition of District Boards. More significant still, the proposal was carried (p 148)

I have given these long quotations because they will have more weight than anything I can say

Lord Morley, who was then Secretary of State for India, wrote in 1909, to the Viceroy, and asked him "to consider the best way of carrying out a policy that would make the village a starting-point in public life" (p 132) This wise policy has not been fully carried out anywhere There are Village Panchâyats, Village Forest Panchayats, Village Courts, working admirably, each on its own line, but there is no co ordination All village activities should be centred in one Panchâyat, which should divide itself into administrative Committees, as in Dewan Bahadur T Rangachariar's admirable Bill (See National Convention Memoranda No 10) Also the Village Panchâyat should be related to the Taluka—or Sub District—Sabha, and that to the District Samiti At present there is no rational relation

#### **The Return of True Democracy to the East**

In the Commonwealth of India Bill, drafted and issued by the NATIONAL CONVENTION, it has carried out this necessary correlation, and has thus made the Bill a coherent whole, built up from the Village to the Central Government Each Council is related to the one below it and the one above it This and the corresponding grading of the electorates are the characteristics of the Bill, and make it differ fundamentally from all western legislation on the subject For a huge country like India, such a system alone can give real Self Government, and make the villager feel that he controls the matters which affect his daily life To vote once in three years for a distant Parliament of which he knows nothing, and whose legislation rarely touches his daily life,



does not raise any interest or enthusiasm To vote every year for his Village Panchâyat and to be sometimes elected to it, the Panchayat which regulates all the things of his daily life, *that* he feels as Self Government The one is called Democracy in the West The other is a true Democracy in the East

The ' True Democracy in the East,' as just said, is founded in the Village as the primary unit of Government, as it existed from time immemorial down to 1816 I have already said that the ruin of the Village was effected by the substitution of officials appointed by Government for the officers of the Village, freely elected by the villagers themselves The British Rulers in passing stray Panchâyat Acts haphazard, have shewn their distrust of Indians by following the advice of the Decentralisation Commission to keep the Local Bodies completely under the hand of the Collector, the generally English Head of the District

I have alluded more than once to Dewan Bahadur T Rangachariars Madras Panchâyat Act (Convention Memoranda No 10) which is a model of what such an Act should be While vesting all necessary powers in the Panchayat it naturally does not say anything as to the advantages which will accrue to the villages by the knowledge which will flow down to it from above, nor of the higher franchises which a villager can gain by improving himself thus opening up to each villager avenues to higher powers and responsibilities as he increases his own capacities and his own knowledge In the Commonwealth of India Bill, the Units of Government laid down are the Grâma (Mauza Village) the Taluka (Tahsil, Sub District) the

Zillâ (District, urban or rural), the Râshtra (Sûbhâ, Province), and the whole Country, Hindustan (India) These five are defined, and their powers (administrative, legislative and judicial), with their franchises, and qualifications of candidates for each laid down

The Village controls its own Primary School, the Talukâ, the Lower Secondary, or Middle, Schools, the District, Higher Secondary or High Schools, and Colleges; the Province, the Universities At each stage, manual accompanies the literary education, whether it be the simple industries or crafts worked in the Village, or the scientific, commercial, industrial, artistic, education of the secondary stage, about the middle of which specialisation, according to the tendencies of the pupil, should begin, after a sound common foundation by the training of brain, hands and eye has been laid, as the necessary condition of easy social life in manhood and womanhood Throughout, religious and moral teaching will be given, and the body will be trained by athletics, games, and exercises of all sorts, with periodical medical inspection

From the Province, the best knowledge needed in the various Districts should be gathered for the best experts obtainable from any country, in a Provincial Institute, and that useful to each District sent down to its Technical Institute, therein should less highly trained but competent experts direct the research into the soils of the District, the manures suited to each, the crops most suitable, with stores of seeds, etc., to be drawn on by the Talukas for application in their Model Farms, where the villagers could see actual cultivation proceeding, the Talukâs should keep stud animals for hire to the agricul-

turalists, machinery where helpful, stores of seeds suitable for the Villages, and have men ready to advise, and accept a villager for training in any new method, which he could, in turn, impart to his fellow-villagers. It is by such graded knowledge flowing downwards, and graded power open to all who will make more of themselves, rising upwards, that wealth and prosperity and happiness would come back to our country, and India would regain these as the natural fruitage of her regained Freedom.

### **Delimitation of Provinces**

It may be well to explain why some important matters have not been included in the Commonwealth of India Bill.

1 The present delimitation of Provinces has mostly been made in a more or less haphazard way, without any regard to the Mother tongues of the people. Madras has five of these—Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, Malayalam, Oriya; Bombay has four—Marâthi, Gujarati, Kanarese, Sindhi; and so on. If the masses who only know their own Mother-tongue are to take any interest in public business, it must reach them in their own tongue. In both of these above, a large number of the educated know Sanskrit, if Hindus, Arabic and Urdu if Musalmans, Zend if Parsis.

Again, the Districts within the Provinces are sometimes of huge size. Take, as example, Vizagapatam in the Madras Presidency. It has an area of 17,223 square miles and a population of over 3,000,000. There are 267 Districts in India, giving an average area of 4000 square miles, and an average population of 900,000. The average size of an English County is 1000 square miles, with average

population of 900,000. Comment is unnecessary. But it was thought better to leave such matters for the Indian Parliament to consider and decide, rather than encumber with them a Bill creating a Constitution. Indians can do such work far better than foreigners, and the matter need not be placed before the British Parliament.

If any doubt if Indians are capable of exercising powers and accepting responsibilities, let them realise that while they are now dwarfed and stunted in their development by being persons in "our great Dependency," deprived of power and responsibility and forced into the moulds of the foreign ruling Nation, it is impossible for them to grow into healthy and self-reliant manhood and womanhood. What reason is there to suppose that the present generation of Indians is different from those who administered this land so well for millennia that the merchants of the various Kingdoms of Europe cast greedy and covetous eyes upon it, and fought each other in order to snatch a chance of "shaking the pagoda tree," their countries rising in wealth and prosperity as they drained India "white," to use Lord Salisbury's accurate but terrible phrase?

There is plenty of evidence available of the value and the influence of the Panchâyat in the evil days which preceded its fall. Dr. John Matthai quotes two English writers on this behalf, and Lord Ronaldshay's evidence of the good effects of its partial revival has been given at length. Dr. John Matthai writes :

The chief advantage of a Panchâyat was, of course, the obligation which the very nature of the tribunal threw upon the parties and witnesses to tell the truth. In a small concentrated community, it was not likely that anyone who cared to live a comfortable life, would venture an untruth before a Council of his fellows. Sleeman, in his

*Rambles and Recollections* (vol II, Chap II, pp 34—5, 1893), has an interesting comment on the difficulty he sometimes felt in arriving at the truth, in cases in which sepoys were involved, "and yet, I believe, there are no people in the world from whom it is more easy to get it in their own village communities, where they state it before their relations, elders and neighbors, whose esteem is necessary to happiness and can be obtained only by adherence to truth". Another advantage which must have helped the long continuance of the system was that, in the greater or lesser degree of isolation in which village communities often found themselves, there was no other tribunal of any competence before which disputes could be easily lodged. Moreover, the local authority and knowledge of the elders rendered the Panchâyat in ordinary cases—that is, in cases which did not entail undue labor—clear and prompt in its decision.

Dr Matthai gives much interesting evidence of the value of Panchâyats, he quotes Mr A. D Campbell, I. C S, who states

*I have often found the parties (disputes on land revenue) resist all argument on the part of my native servants as well as of myself, but immediately concede the point with cheerfulness, when decided in favor of the Government, by a Panchâyat (loc cit p 167)*

In disputes about water irrigating village lands and in other local matters, there is evidence that decisions of the East India Company Collector gave offence and were open to charges of favoritism, the decision of the Panchayat, or of its officer in charge of the department in which the matter of dispute arose, was at once accepted, and there was no more trouble. As I have said elsewhere

All this is perfectly natural, but it is almost impossible to convince an Englishman that any way can be better than his own Nation's way of doing things. None the less it remains true that any real Self Government in India must be founded on universal suffrage in each village, the real Self-Government formed in India from time immemorial

The great obstacle in the way of restoring the old

prosperity of the villages, and thereby giving contentment for unrest, is the private property in land established in India by the British Rulers. It is in danger in their own country, where the landless classes, being now educated, see the great wrong inflicted on all who are born into a land where the soil is owned by a section of the population, and the rest have to make the best terms they can for the right to live in the country of their birth. The "Permanent Settlement of Bengal" has created the analogue of the British landlord, with his unjust privileges and "vested interests." The Taluqdars and Zamindars of Agra and Oudh take about 40 per cent of the gross produce, and the Government takes 10 p c or sometimes only 8. The Mirasdars in Madras—mostly absentee landlords—take a much higher percentage for the permission to grow crops on their land. There has been plenty of protest, both from Indian and British writers during the last century, against the way in which Britain, the "Trustee," is mismanaging the estate of its Indian "Ward." I have mentioned (see p 86) Mr Shore's remarks in 1837. In the preceding year, Mr Marriott had pointed out that the country was far more prosperous under "native Rule," *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, by Dadabhai Naoroji (p 44), and he comments on the "heavy tribute" which India pays to her Trustee. Taxation is rising, not falling, and the manipulation of the exchange value of the rupee, to the disturbance of trade and the ruin of many Indian merchants, adds to the poverty of the country. This could be stopped by giving to India a gold standard, the English sovereign, instead of allowing its value to jump up and down, so that neither private persons nor traders, when they purchase,

ever know what payment they will have to make when it falls due Taxation is constantly rising Land revenue was 26 2 crores in 1898, 30 1 in 1910, in the succeeding years it was 33, 34, 34½, 34¼, 35¾, 35¾, 35, 34, 36¾, 34¾ crores The total net revenue in 1909-10 was £74,600 000, in 1911-12 it was 85 crores, in the succeeding years 90½ 86½, 79¾, nearly 84, 103, 120, 129, nearly 138, 144½ in 1920 21 Yet the Indian Civil Service, by the Lee Commission Report, is to add to this about a crore and a quarter, added apparently with a light heart, but in 1921—the last year to which *The Statistical Abstract* is carried, there was a deficit of 26 crores, diminished in the succeeding years by increased taxation To add more than a crore to the deficit in order to increase the emoluments of the Services to a higher figure, while the remunerative subjects are starved, could only be done by a foreign Trustee with a helpless Ward The "safeguards provided in the Act of 1919 are all for the benefit of the Trustee It is the Ward whose interests require them

For how long is this financial control to continue?

Apart from this I have stated here enough facts about the inefficiency of British irresponsible Rule in India to prove that a change in the system of Government is imperatively necessary, and that without delay, unless India is to die Continued life is impossible under present conditions Reduced to miserable poverty, with title hold on physical life, with millions suffering from hunger throughout their lives, with the shortest average life-period known, with a frightful infantile mortality, immersed in ignorance, full of unrest due to continued suffering, and growing desperate with the absence of all

remedy and seeing no hope of change in the darkness of their existence—how can India live, how can such a condition of things much longer continue? *How much longer ought it to continue?* Matthew Arnold wrote of a "Power that makes for Righteousness" The Hebrew Prophet cried "Verily there is a God that judgeth the earth" In the *Mahābhārata* we read Bhishma's warning to Yudhishtira "Beware of the weak The tears of the weak undermine the throne of Kings"

For the sake of India's life and of Britain's honor, in the name of human ruth and Divine Justice, I appeal to all good men and women in both countries to join their hands and hearts in a resolute effort to save Britain from shame and India from quickly-coming death The fate of Humanity is largely involved in the events of the next few years, for either India and Britain, linked by Love and Justice, will enter together the New Era, in peace and equal honor, or else will arise the Great War between the colored and the white races, a life and death grapple in which the world will be laid desolate, and civilisation will again crash down, covering the wide earth with its ruins, until a stronger and a nobler race will appear to take our place, and build a renovated world.

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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### An Appeal to the Nation

#### Close up the Ranks

As a bugle call sounds through the din of battle, through the thunder of guns, calling on the fighting men to advance or retreat, so has a silver trumpet-note rung out from realms invisible, calling on scattered parties, fighting for the Freedom of the Indian Motherland, to close up their ranks and advance together, to capture the Government of their own country, to establish Swaraj. That trumpet-note rings over the battle-field where Autocracy and Representative Government are locked in deadly strife, which must lead to the triumph of one or the other. It is the same battle as was fought out in Europe between the Allies, who fought "to make the world safe for Democracy," and the Central Powers, who fought for the establishment of a world wide Empire, based on military force, directed by a War-Lord, who claimed to be the Vicegerent of the Most High. The issue of that struggle freed many subject Nations but they were all white. They were helped by colored men by Indians from the East, by Africans from the South, these colored hosts poured out their blood to free white men in Europe, they returned to their own lands to find white men dominating their own people, as the Kaiser had sought to dominate Europe. Europe was set free, India, the Heart of Asia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, with Egypt and the whole African Continent, remained under white yokes. The issue which

statesmen should have strained every nerve to avoid, the issue of the world-domination of the white races over the colored, has been forced to the front, and has to be determined, ere the great struggle that began in 1914 can find its ending in a world at peace.

I have spoken above of "realms invisible". Let me put it more plainly. I believe that the world is governed ultimately, so far as our Solar System is concerned, by Him whom the Greeks called the LOGOS, the WORD, and that WORD is the Voice of GOD, is GOD, for this portion of His universe. His Viceroy's rule the planets of which our world is one. In our world, He has spoken through His Messengers, whom Hindus and Buddhists call Rishis, Christians and Muhammadans Prophets, and He uses Devas or Angels, the Hosts invisible with them. All the religions, including the Zoroastrian, believe in this, though to many it may be "a pious belief" rather than an active fact. All acknowledge it in their prayers, even if they ignore it in their lives. A practical active belief in it underlies all my own life, since I am what is sometimes called "a practical mystic". But the appeal of this article is valid without it, on grounds of human justice, for those who ignore or deny this one paragraph. I believe, as the soldiers believed in the battlefields of north-eastern France, that the "Patron Saints" of England and France, S. George and S. Joan, the Maid of Orleans, and many Angels, helped the human warriors in those deadly struggles, and saved the grey hosts from rolling over them to victory. To me, the decision of the British Cabinet, establishing the dominance of the white race in Kenya, of 9,000 whites over 22,000 civilised colored men and 2,500,000 mostly uncivilised colored men, is answered by that "silver trumpet-note from realms

invisible," calling on India to lead in the struggle for Freedom for the colored races of the world, and to that end to close up her ranks

Be that as it may, there are reasons enough and to spare why she should lead it The Cabinet of Great Britain, in the appropriately named White Paper, has thrown down the challenge, trampling on the Resolution signed by Britain in the Imperial Conference of 1921, and making it a "scrap of paper"—as did the Kaiser in 1914 with the Treaty of the Neutrality of Belgium, signed by Germany (In this we must not include the South African Government, as General Smuts refused to sign the Resolution, and therefore has not broken his word) The Kenya decision is the decision of the Cabinet, Major Ormsby-Gore has told us The question to be decided, therefore, is Shall the British Empire become a White Commonwealth, ruling over subject colored races all the world over, or shall it be an Indo British Commonwealth—"Indo" standing for the colored races as "British" stands for the white?

Now, in the answer to this, the main element is the winning of Swaraj by India She cannot use her strength while she is a subject Nation I know that Mr Lloyd George said, during the War, that the term "subject Nation" should no longer be used But why not, so long as it represents a fact? Taxation against the will of the representatives of the people is the chief sign of subjection, and the restoration of the grant for the Royal Commission on the Services and of that for the Railways, and the Certification of the Finance Bill were three cases in one session of such taxation Lord Ronaldshay acted in the spirit of the Reform Act though its letter gave him power—as did the Viceroy in 1921 and 22—

when, on the refusal of the Police Grant, he explained the need for it, and saying that he could not discharge his responsibilities without it, and that it was for him to resign if there were a definite breach between the Council and himself, re submitted it to the Council, which then granted it, with a reduction which he accepted. In this struggle, Swaraj is our main objective because, with that, the power of Whitehall will be broken, and we can protect our own Nationals. Kenya is only a skirmish, but none the less must we fight it, because the whole principle is involved. In the main struggle we shall win, this is but an outpost affair. But the silver trumpet-note bids us fight it, and therefore to cease our quarrelings, to abandon our dissensions, for they threaten our advance to Freedom, are barriers in our way, we should be, we must be, one great band of brethren, standing shoulder to shoulder, feeling that the insult and humiliation of our brothers abroad are the insult and humiliation of India, our Motherland, and that the insult and humiliation bid us to have done with discord, and to renew our active brotherhood, as children of one Bhâratamâtâ as we felt it in the unity which carried us forward so mightily and wonderfully from 1914 to the end of 1918.

Three solemn duties lie before us, to accompany the winning of Swaraj. First, to set our own house in order by cleansing our hands from the sin of untouchability, we cannot rationally protest against colored untouchability abroad until we abolish outcaste untouchability at home. And this we can do without legislation, each in our homes and circle of acquaintances and neighbors, although legislation is also eminently desirable. True, the Kenya decision sanctions it in fact, though not in word, and the setting apart of an area in

the Lowlands for Indians is like our setting apart villages for outcastes. Since then there has been the outrage on the Africans, by the approval of forced labor, & e, the re-introduction of slavery.

Second, to consult on measures to be taken to bring home to Great Britain, her Cabinet, and the white settlers in Kenya, that the Kenya decisions are intolerable and must be reversed. When Confucius was asked whether he would return good for evil, being a statesman dealing with National affairs, and not a Sannyâsin, he answered "With what then will you return good? Recompense good with good, and evil with Justice." Reciprocity of treatment is justice between Nations and has been definitely sanctioned as the Right of every Nation towards other Nations. The buying of South African coal instead of Bengal, and the checking of the Bengal industry, emphasise the necessity for Swarâj.

Some effective measures we must seek, for the Kenya decision assails the Ideal of the Indo-British Commonwealth, and if its policy is followed, that Ideal will be destroyed. The path followed by many, from 1919 to 1923, has not achieved its purpose, but, by our divisions, has encouraged Britain to commit the Kenya outrage.

Third, we have made 1924 and 1925 memorable by the holding of a NATIONAL CONVENTION to establish Swaraj in India in the only way in which it can be established firmly and without bloodshed—by the elected representatives of the Nation meeting for that purpose in a Convention, because they cannot meet for it within the Legislatures. But they can do it and have done it, outside them, as the elected of the Nation, and if the Nation is behind them and behind the Commonwealth

of India Bill which they have framed, Swarâj will be won.

Let us then join in common counsel against the common danger, a contest between white and colored races that will wreck the civilisation of the world. There is no time to be lost. India's anger is natural, just and righteous. GOD grant it may attain its natural, just and righteous end in Swarâj, and GOD forbid that it should become unmanageable, as I know it will do if the country remain divided as it is to-day.

Comrades, I was one of those who led you in the advance from 1914 to 1919. You elected me as President of the undivided Congress of 1917. Pardon me, then, if in this moment of National, nay, of world, peril, I address you in favor of Union and of Peace.

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## APPENDIX 1

### The Commonwealth of India Bill

The following are some of the main features of the Commonwealth of India Bill

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1 India will be placed on an equal footing with the Self Governing Dominions, sharing their responsibilities and their privileges.

2 The right of Self Government will be exercised from the Village (*Grām* or *Mauzā*) upwards in each successive autonomous area of wider extent, namely the Talukā (or *Tahsil* or *Sub District*), the District (or *Zillā*), the Province (or *Rāshtra*) and India (or *Hindustān*) excluding the Indian States

3 The three great spheres of activity, Legislative, Executive, and Judicial, will, as far as possible be independent of each other, while correlated in their working

#### DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

4 The following Fundamental Rights will be guaranteed to every person

(a) Inviolability of the liberty of the person and of his dwelling and property

(b) Freedom of conscience and the free practice of religion, subject to public order or morality

(c) Free expression of opinion and the right of assembly peaceably and without arms, and of forming Associations or Unions, subject to public order or morality.

(d) Free Elementary Education as soon as practicable.

(e) The use of roads, places dedicated to the public, Courts of Justice, and the like.

(f) Equality before the Law, irrespective of considerations of Nationality, and

(g) Equality of sexes.

### LEGISLATIVE

5 There will be two Chambers in the Commonwealth Parliament, namely, the Legislative Assembly and the Senate. The Legislative Assembly will consist of 300 Members and the Senate of 150.

6. The Senate will have equal powers with the Legislative Assembly except in regard to Money Bills, which will originate only in the latter. The life of the Legislative Assembly will be for 5 years and that of the Senate for 6 years, but the Assembly can be dissolved sooner by the Viceroy, while the Senate will have a continuous existence, with half the number of Members retiring every three years by a process of rotation.

7. In the Provinces, the number of Members will vary from 100 to 200 according to the size and importance of the Province. The life of a Legislative Council will ordinarily be for 4 years, unless it is dissolved sooner by the Governor. There will be at present only one Chamber in the Provincial Legislatures, but provision has been made in the Bill for the addition of a Second Chamber in a Province, if it so decides. In the District Samiti, Talukâ Sabhâ and Village Panchâyat, which are termed the Sub-Provincial Units of Government, the number the members will vary according to local conditions. The ordinary life-term of the District Samiti will be for three years, that of the Talukâ Sabhâ for two years, and that of the Village Panchâyat for a year.



## FRANCHISES

8 The franchises for the various Legislative bodies have been graded, commencing with universal adult suffrage in the Village, and restricted by higher educative, administrative, property or other monetary qualifications in the case of each higher body. The principle of direct election has been maintained throughout, except in the case of the Senate, where candidates will be nominated to a panel from which the electorate will make its choice. A distinction has also been observed between Members and Electors, the qualifications for the former being kept at a somewhat higher level than for the latter.

9 The powers of the various Legislative bodies have been embodied in a Schedule to the Constitution, and residuary powers have been vested in the Commonwealth Parliament.

## DEFENCE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

10 Reservation has been made as regards Defence and Foreign Affairs. There will be a Defence Commission with a majority of Indians thereon, every five years, appointed by the Viceroy in consultation with the Cabinet. The Commission will recommend a minimum of non votable expenditure for the Defence Forces, and also report on the progress of the Indianisation of those Forces. In the event of disagreement, the Viceroy will have power to secure the minimum which, in his opinion, is necessary for the Defence Forces. But no revenue of India may be spent on any branch of the Forces in which Indians are ineligible for holding Commissioned rank. As soon as the Commission recommends favorably, the Commonwealth Parliament may pass an Act to undertake the full responsibility of Defence.

## EXECUTIVE

11 There will be a Cabinet in the Government of India consisting of the Prime Minister and not less than 7 Ministers of State, who will be collectively responsible for the administration of the Commonwealth. The Prime Minister will be appointed by the Viceroy and the other Ministers on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Viceroy will be temporarily in charge of the Defence Forces of the Commonwealth. In all matters except as regards Defence, the Viceroy will act only upon the advice of the Cabinet. The salaries of the Viceroy and of the Members of the Cabinet will be fixed by the Parliament of the Commonwealth, but in the case of the former, no alteration will come into force during his continuance in office. The Cabinet will resign as soon as it has lost the support of a majority in the Legislative Assembly, unless the latter be dissolved.

12 In the Provinces, the same principles will apply as in the Government of the Commonwealth, except that the minimum number of Ministers will be three.

13 The powers and functions of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State in Council over the revenues and the administration of India will be transferred to the Commonwealth Executive.

## JUDICIAL

14 There will be a Supreme Court of India, consisting of a Chief Justice and not less than two other Judges, with original as well as appellate jurisdiction to deal with such matters as may be determined by statute. It will have power to deal with all matters arising out of the interpretation of the Constitution or of laws made by the Commonwealth Parliament. It will also be the final

appellate authority in India, unless it certifies that the question is one which should be determined by the Privy Council

15. The existing High Courts will have the same powers and authority as before the establishment of the Commonwealth

### FINANCE

16 The revenues of the Commonwealth will form a consolidated revenue fund, and will be vested in the Viceroy No revenue may be raised by the Executive without the sanction of Parliament

17 No money may be drawn from the Treasury of the Commonwealth except with the consent of Parliament.

18 The allocation of revenues between the Commonwealth and Provinces will be decided by a Finance Commission every five years. There will be absolute freedom of trade, commerce and intercourse between the Provinces

### NEW PROVINCES

19 Parliament will have the power to alter the limits of the existing Provinces or establish new Provinces and make laws for their administration But in every case, the consent of the Provinces, or the area concerned, will be necessary before any alteration is made

### MINORITIES

20 Communal Representation as now existing will be abolished, and all elections will be held on the basis of purely territorial electorates As a temporary measure, the number of seats now reserved for Musalmâns and Europeans will be guaranteed for five years, at the end

of which period the question of its continuance, modification or abolition will be examined by a Franchise Commission

Bills affecting the religion or the religious rites or usages of a community or communities will be referred to a Special Committee of the Legislature in which they are introduced, and if the Committee, on which there will be a majority of the members of the community or communities concerned, report adversely, such Bills will lapse for the period of one year

### PUBLIC SERVICES

21 There will be a Public Services Commission to exercise full control over the Public Services of India as regards recruitment, discipline, promotion and pensions. Officers now in the service of the Government of India or of the Provincial Governments will be guaranteed their existing rights, but at the establishment of the Commonwealth, they will pass into the service of the Commonwealth or the Provinces, as the case may be

### ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

22 Parliament will have the power to alter the Constitution in the manner prescribed in the Bill

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## APPENDIX II

### A Memorandum

To the Government of Britain

ON

The Commonwealth of India Bill

A brief Memorandum on the necessity of passing the *Commonwealth of India Bill*, signed by over forty Indian political leaders of various Parties has been issued. It runs

Founding ourselves on (1) the Resolution proposed by Mr (now Sir) Surendra Nath Bannerjee and carried unanimously in the National Congress of 1914 that India should be placed on an equality with the Self Governing Dominions and on (2) the Resolution of the Congress in 1918 claiming the right to Self Determination, said by Mr Lloyd George to be applicable to tropical countries We demand from the Parliament of Britain the passing of a statute embodying these Resolutions. This demand is made because of the pressing emergency of the time. Resentment is justly felt in India against Britain, because of the refusal of Britain to apply in India the principles for which India and Britain fought shoulder to shoulder in the War. There is serious danger that the connexion between India and Britain, so useful in its possibilities to both countries and to the world, will be broken if India and Britain do not agree to replace the bond of force and submission by one of honorable equality and friendship. Though nearly seven

years have passed since the ending of the War, no step has been taken by Britain to fulfil the above Resolutions, but, on the contrary, steps are being taken to perpetuate the administration of affairs of India by a foreign bureaucracy, and assurances are being authoritatively given to British undergraduates to induce them to enter the service of Britain in India by the promise that they will have a life-job. Proposals for further burdens are being made, while powers vested in the Governor-General and Governors in India for the preservation of India's external defence and her internal tranquillity are being used to strengthen the "Steel-Frame," in defiance of the votes of her representatives, and to make tranquillity impossible by withholding the Freedom which is her right. The Prime Minister has made a sinister proposal that the term "Empire" shall be changed into "Commonwealth of British Nations," thus relegating India definitely to the detested position of a Dependency. For India, Freedom is a matter of life and death. The appalling poverty of the masses, the neglect of their education shown by the disgracefully low figure of percentage of school attendance, the short life-period, the little tenacity of life—seen with surprise even by Lord Curzon—these and many other things such as the death-rate being twice lately higher than the birth-rate, show that, as a Nation, she is on the down grade, under British Rule. We repeat the charge of Gopal Krishna Gokhalé that, while efficient in organisation of her machinery and in matters which serve her own interests, British Rule is inefficient in vital matters which touch the National Interests. Under the present régime, with the Government of India subordinate to the Secretary of State, India can

neither revive her old prosperity at home nor defend her Nationals abroad. An enormous proportion of her revenue is spent on the Army, because the Army is kept for Imperial not for Home defence. In this she was better off in the days of the Company than now. She is daily shamed in the face of the world by the increasing humiliations heaped on her Nationals in other parts of the Empire. The Government of India is helpless to defend them. The British Government cares only for its own kin. There is only one cure for the admitted "restlessness" of India, and that is her Freedom. Her irritability finds vent in domestic quarrels, because she is denied self-expression as a Nation. If this continues and Britain is obdurate in her refusal to agree to her Demand for Dominion Status—on which all the political parties are agreed—the Government will become increasingly difficult and, ere long, impossible. We do not say this as a threat, for we seek an honorable agreement, such as Britain refused to her American Colonies and created a Republic, but made with her other Colonies and created peace and amity. We also desire peace and amity and therefore, before it is too late, we state the danger as an approaching fact. Indian leaders were accused of making threats with regard to the Rowlatt Bill, when they uttered only a warning, and were disregarded by the Government. The Bill became an Act and remained a dead letter, but it caused resentment—driven underground by the massacre of Amritsar and the Martial Law atrocities in the Panjab—to grow, though silently. We also give a warning, for a Nation cannot for ever submit to foreign domination. Let the British cease to claim superiority and become equal friends, and the Union between the two

countries will be secure. No intermediate steps are required—and so far as we are concerned they would be rejected—before the establishment of Dominion Status in India by the passing of a measure made by Indians, as has been done in the cases of the Dominions and Ireland (The Act giving Freedom to Canada was admittedly drafted on the lines of Canadian Resolutions, while in other cases the Bills were drafted by the Colonies). It was not demanded that any Colony should be ready to take full responsibility of Self-Defence before Dominion Status was granted. Even now they depend on the British Navy for the defence of their coasts. India has already a magnificent Army of Infantry and Cavalry, and her helplessness in Artillery and Air Force, due to Britain not to herself, demands time before she can be wholly self-dependent in defence. England's default in this respect is no reason for the further injustice of denying her Freedom. We therefore demand from the British Parliament the passage of the Commonwealth of India Bill, prepared by Members and ex-Members of Indian Legislatures of all political parties, by the elected Council of the National Home Rule League, and two co-opted officers of the Women's Indian Association. The country is organising itself in its support, and work will be carried to success, for when a great Nation demands its Freedom it cannot long be denied.

The signatories are

MADRAS—The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (Liberal), Messrs. T. Rangachariar, M. L. A. (Independent, Deputy-President of the Assembly), C. Gopala Menon, M. L. C., Secretary, Southern India Chamber of Commerce (Swarajist), Ranganatha Mudaliar, M. L. C. (Home



Ruler), Dr C Natesa Mudaliar, M L C (Justice Party), L A Govindaraghava Iyer (Liberal), Dr Annie Besant (Home Ruler, President of the National Congress, 1917), Dorothy Jinarajadasa (Women's Indian Association), A Rangaswami Aiyar (Home Ruler), D K Telang (Home Ruler), S M Padshah (Member, Council of State), C R Reddy, M L C, Swami Venkatachallam Chetty, M L C, Dewan Bahadur M Ramachandra Rao, M L A (Independent), M C Raja, M L C, and Guruswami, M L C, representing Submerged Classes (signed subject to safeguarding interests of Depressed Classes), B Shiva Rao (Home Ruler), M Moosa Sait, M L C, C V. S Narasimha Raju, M L C (Leader of United Nationalists)

BENGAL—I B Sen (Liberal), Hirendra Nath Datta (Home Ruler), Bipin Chandra Pal (Independent), Satyananda Bose (Liberal), J Chaudhuri (Liberal)

BOMBAY—M R Jayakar, M L C (Leader of the Swarajya Party in Council), Sarojini Naidu, (President, Bombay Provincial Congress Committee), N C Kelkar, M L A, Editor of *Kesari*, D V Gokhale, Editor of *The Mahratta*, B S Kamat ex-M L A (Liberal), Jamnadas Dwarkadas ex M L A (Home Ruler), Shaukat Ali, Secretary of Khilafat Central Committee, Ratansi D Morari (Home Ruler), Kanji Dwarkadas, ex-M L C (Home Ruler)

UNITED PROVINCES—Iswar Saran, ex-M L A (Independent), P K Telang (Home Ruler), Iqbal N Gurtu ex M L C (Home Ruler)

CENTRAL PROVINCES Messrs G S Khapardé (Council of State), M S Aney, M L C (Swarajist), Rao Bahadur N K Kelkar, ex Minister (Liberal), B G Khaparde (Leader of Swarajya Party in Berar), Ramarao

M. Deshmukh (Swarâjist, President of the Marâthâ Political Conference)

BIHAR AND ORISSA —Syed Ali Imam, K C S I, late Prime Minister to H. E H the Nizam, Syed Hasan Imam, President of Special Congress, 1918

Dr. Besant says that a strong agitation is being prepared to support the Bill and already 99 registered Samitis and Sabhâs are formed, with another 30 formed but not registered formally The Mahârâshtra Political Conference supports the Bill

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